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THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE
AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

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LIBRARIANSHIP
NO. 3

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

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PREFACE

THIS STUDY of public library administration was begun as the result of a conviction that since American public libraries have grown so in size and influence, there was a need for a survey in which existing methods of organization and management would be recorded, compared, and analyzed. It was believed that the best results would be achieved if two viewpoints could be brought into the study—that of the student of library problems and that of the student of public administration.

Most of the material for the study was collected during the summer of 1940, and the spring and summer of 1941. Hence, although later material has been added and earlier material has been revised, most of the data represent information as of the year 1940.

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A list of those who have aided the study at one point or another would closely resemble an honor roll of librarianship. Over 202 librarians cooperated in supplying information requested by mail. In addition forty-two librarians generously and willingly gave of their time and counsel during visits to their libraries, often at considerable inconvenience. Several of these were kind enough to read and criticise earlier drafts of the survey report. At several stages in the study, valuable assistance has been given by Dr. P. L. Windsor, Dr. Carl M. White, Dr. C. B. Joeckel, Mr. Lowell Martin, Mr. Paul Howard, and Mrs. Mary Duncan Carter. The sincere thanks

of the authors go to each of them. Finally, it is a pleasure to acknowledge and to express genuine appreciation for a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, without which the study would not have been possible.

June 22, 1943

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CHAPTER I

SCOPE AND METHODS

THIS STUDY IS A SURVEY of the administration of American public libraries. It deals with problems involved in organizing and managing these libraries—governmental relations, the place of the board and the executive, the departmental organization of the library, finance, personnel, and planning and coordination.

While the terms administration and management are often used interchangeably, the former is usually the more inclusive term and is so used in this study. Administration means getting the job done. For the library, this includes all the activities which are involved in carrying out its major purposes. Organizing is one part of administration, and relates to dividing activities in such a way that the advantages of specialization are achieved with as much recognition as possible being given to the essential unity of the program. More or less well-defined departments or divisions reflect this effort.

Management is that part of administration which emphasizes leadership, and which involves the marshalling of personnel, finances, and procedures in the most effective manner.

The inclusive meaning of the term administration properly embraces two areas which are not a major concern of this study. The first of these is governmental relations, a subject which has been covered by C. B. Joeckel's *The government of the American public library*.¹ The present study discusses governmental relations only as a background for presenting management problems, and in so doing draws heavily upon Mr. Joeckel's book.

A second area not covered is that of detailed operations. No effort has been made to analyze library processes and routines, or to study the details of organization within departments.

¹(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935).

OBJECTIVES.—The study has three major objectives:

First, to describe the organization and management of American public libraries;

Second, to summarize the experience of libraries in dealing with various organization and management problems;

Third, to appraise library administration with particular reference to experience in public and business administration.

LIBRARIES INCLUDED.—An attempt has been made to include as nearly as possible the same libraries which were studied in *The government of the American public library*. While there have been a few deaths and also a few reorganizations since Mr. Joeckel's data were collected, the list of libraries included in this study is essentially the same as Mr. Joeckel's list. Specifically, 315 municipal libraries in cities which, according to the 1930 census, had 30,000 population or over were studied.² Privately endowed libraries which serve a limited clientele have not been included. County libraries are not included, except in a few instances where they are also the principal agency for the municipality.

METHODS OF THE STUDY.—Two methods of investigation have been used. The first involved analysis of written material and questionnaire returns. Annual reports, board by-laws, staff manuals and other materials containing information on administration were collected from the cooperating libraries. This was followed by the sending of a request for information which asked for a description of the library's organization and the answers to certain questions regarding administration. Information by mail, including the request for information, was obtained from 202 of the 315 libraries. Several additional libraries sent annual reports and other material.

The second method of investigation was observation and interview. Forty-two additional libraries were visited by one or both of the investigators, in many cases after information had been secured by mail. On these visits many persons were

²For a list of the libraries studied see p. 237.

interviewed and the libraries were observed in action. The information obtained from visits constitutes the basis for most of the discussion of management problems.

GROUPING OF LIBRARIES BY SIZE.—Many problems of administration are directly affected by the factor of size. Hence some method of grouping libraries according to size was found necessary.

Number of staff members was selected as the basis for this grouping after various other bases had been explored. Size of staff is not only closely related to size of budget, but is obviously important where administrative matters are concerned.

TABLE I
LIBRARIES GROUPED ACCORDING TO SIZE OF STAFF

Size of Staff in Full-time Equivalent	Number of Libraries
"Small" group:	
I. Less than 10	46
"Medium" group:	
II. 10 to 24	89
III. 25 to 74	71
"Large" group:	
IV. 75 to 149	12
V. 150 to 299	14
VI. 300 and over	12
Total	244

Table I presents three groups of libraries.³ Small libraries are those with staffs of less than ten people; medium-sized libraries, those with staffs of from ten to seventy-four; and large libraries, those with staffs of seventy-five and over. The division lines were selected after considerable study, and represent approximate points at which problems of organization and management began to differ markedly.

³Data from several libraries were furnished through the courtesy of the American Library Association. Number of staff is in terms of full-time equivalent.

PRESENTATION OF THE MATERIAL.—The material of the study is presented in three broad divisions. The first division deals with over-all controls, governmental relations, the place of the board, and the library and its executives. The second deals with the organization of libraries into departments. The third deals with the management areas of finance, personnel, and coordinating devices.

The material under organization is confined to libraries with staffs of ten or over. "Departmentation in the Large Library" (Chap. V) includes libraries with staffs of seventy-five and over, while "Departmentation in the Medium-Sized Library" (Chap. VI) includes libraries with staffs of from ten to seventy-four. Where there are problems which overlap, the discussion is not repeated in detail. Hence, Chapter V is more or less fundamental to Chapter VI. Some of the themes running throughout the entire study are summarized in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING FOR ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A LIBRARY is not administered in a vacuum, but is continually subject to certain influences which in many cases are almost final in their effect upon organization and management. Among the more important of these for the public library are: the objectives sought, legal provisions and relations with the city government, and trends in municipal government. These matters are discussed in order to describe the conditions under which the library's administration must operate.

THE DEFINITION OF LIBRARY OBJECTIVES

An organization can be evaluated only in the light of the objectives which it is designed to attain:

Since it is axiomatic that the attaining of objectives must be by appropriate means, the means—in this case administrative techniques and organizational structure—may be expected to vary with different objectives. Knowing where you want to go is thus a prerequisite for determining what course you will take.¹

Librarians on the whole have not given careful thought to the definition of their objectives before shaping their organizations. Their major attention has been given to getting things done, on the practical aspects of librarianship rather than the theoretical or philosophical problems. Thus it is not surprising that in the present study few libraries were found in which there had been a systematic attempt to formulate and state the library's objectives.

This does not mean that there has been no concern with objectives, for librarians have devoted much thought and study

¹M. E. Dimock, "The place of organization in institutional development," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues in library administration*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 69.

to individual questions which affect objectives. Some of these are the advisability of providing recreational reading, the organization for adult advisory services, and the extent to which services to school children should be given. It is the organization of such individual policy decisions into a comprehensive and definitive statement of aims which has been lacking. And yet, such statements of aims are important and would be of great value in practical administrative matters.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—Every library should have a clear and definitive statement of its objectives.

A forward step, which any library could take, would be the immediate development of long-term plans. Every librarian can now begin to think in terms of major goals, even if many years of study will be needed before a library can define exactly what it hopes to accomplish. From such a beginning it is inevitable that better understanding will result.

Two examples of planning may be cited. In 1928 the Seattle Public Library inaugurated a survey with a view to developing a long-range program for the development of Seattle's library service. *A ten-year program for the Seattle public library* was published in 1930, and outlined seven goals which the library hoped to accomplish. The depression interfered seriously with the attainment of these goals, but two of the seven were accomplished, and in other respects the library benefited from the formulation and existence of the program. As a result, a new ten-year plan for the same library was adopted in 1940.²

In 1926 Mr. Samuel Ranck made a survey of the Montclair Free Public Library. Partly as a result of that survey, the decision was made that

. . . it was essential for the Board of Trustees to have a long-range program which would afford to the tax-appropriating body a clear conception of the future needs and aspirations of the library. Such a

²*The people's university*, a ten-year program for the Seattle Public Library, (Seattle: December, 1940).

program created an opportunity to measure the annual progress of the library towards the established goals and greatly simplified the preparation of the annual budget. A five-year program, developed for the Montclair Library in 1929, has been indispensable to the Board of Trustees ever since, even though its complete fulfilment has not been realized.³

In formulating the Montclair program, a study of other community facilities was made for the purpose of defining the services which the library alone could render satisfactorily, and the decision was reached to concentrate on such services. In addition, efforts were made to study the users of the library and their demands. Spending thirty-nine percent of the library's total budget for information service is based on the belief that the suburban type of community is best served in that way.⁴ Others might disagree with the conclusions, but the process of basing library objectives upon careful study of the community can be applied universally.

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Legal provisions which directly and significantly affect the organization and management of the library must be considered before administration can be discussed intelligently. City-library relations have been treated extensively in C. B. Joeckel's *The government of the American public library*, and the brief discussion which follows is in large part a summary of his findings.

LIBRARY LAW.—Libraries are governed both by library legislation and by general state or municipal legislation. In cases of conflicts between the two, an examination of the laws must be supplemented by an analysis of the decisions that have interpreted the laws. In the absence of court decisions, opinions of state and city attorneys frequently prevail. Corporation and association libraries chartered under special laws or gen-

³Margery C. Quigley and W. E. Marcus, *Portrait of a library*, (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936), p. 49.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 68, 91.

eral incorporation laws are usually not subject to municipal legislation or city ordinances. However, despite the famous decision in the case of *Carpenter vs. St. Louis*,⁵ other city libraries are frequently subject to municipal budget and personnel laws, whenever the city decides to include them.⁶

Where the library is governed by city charter or city ordinances, the legal position may be clearer. The charter may define the extent of city authority over library management through specific provisions or exemptions. In the absence of such definite statements, however, general city ordinances must be presumed to extend to the library. If the library is governed primarily by a simple state-enabling act put into effect by city ordinances, it seems clear that the city can apply to the library any of its general ordinances governing, for example, personnel, purchasing, or finance.

Public libraries organized under a school district are governed by the state's school laws. Where no detailed legal provisions are made for library matters, the school board can exercise its legal authority over the library just as it does for the schools. Where the school district public library is governed by a separate library board the situation is quite different. These libraries, as a rule, are almost completely independent of any governmental control and are relatively free to manage their affairs as they deem best.

GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL OF THE LIBRARY.—One specific effect of legislation upon libraries is the establishment of the type of overhead control. Nine out of ten libraries have a board with certain legal powers and responsibilities. In most cases a board is created by law; in others, the board form, although not specified, has been adopted. In a few libraries

⁵Joeckel, *The government, op. cit.*, pp. 45, 56. In *Carpenter vs. St. Louis*, the court ruled that the city of St. Louis "was merely exercising a governmental function delegated to it by the state, which, though local in its operation, was still a matter of state concern."

⁶Thus, in New Jersey one finds the Newark Public Library under the State Civil Service system, while the Montclair Public Library is not.

control is placed in the hands of the chief executive of the governmental unit, and in a few additional ones, control is placed in the hands of the general legislative body.

The effects of such provisions upon management of the library are obvious. Where a library board has legal prerogatives and responsibilities, it is relatively free from other governmental controls. Where the library is controlled directly by the local government unit, it will usually have to operate under the general management provisions which that unit has set up. In the latter case, many management matters must be handled as prescribed by law. In the former, the library may have a great deal of leeway.

CITY-LIBRARY RELATIONS IN FINANCE.—There are, perhaps, more legal provisions affecting finance than any other phase of library administration. The law commonly determines the source and amount of library funds, the procedure of budget administration, the degree of freedom in determining expenditures, the classification of library accounts, the nature of financial reports, and the requirements for auditing library accounts.

Approximately two-thirds of all public libraries are supported by direct appropriation. "Practice in the granting of appropriations . . . is almost evenly divided between the lump-sum appropriation and the segregated appropriation."⁷ Detailed budget requests are required in many instances, even where the appropriation is in a single sum. There is a noticeable trend in the direction of closer city scrutiny of these requests.

Other forms of financial control tend to follow the pattern of budget adoption. Where close control is exercised over the appropriation, one commonly finds close control over accounting and budget execution.

The classification of library accounts is quite generally determined by the municipality. Only fifty municipal libraries

⁷Joeckel, *The government*, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

in cities of 30,000 population and over do not follow a city scheme.⁸ Some additional libraries follow an accounting classification prescribed by state, county, or school-board officials.

Official accounts for the municipal board-governed libraries are kept by city officers in many instances. In the 30,000 class, Mr. Joeckel reports ten cities in which the city alone keeps accounts, seventy-eight in which both city and library keep accounts, and eighty-five in which the library alone keeps accounts.⁹

Library funds are frequently kept in the custody of a city officer, usually the treasurer. In such instances, a pre-audit of proposed library expenditures as to legality and availability of funds is usually required before payments are made by the city treasurer.

Library accounts are in some instances regularly post-audited by city or state agencies. Where the agency has no responsibility for regular accounting control of the library, a real independent check results. State officers in Ohio and Indiana perform library audits, and city auditors make regular examinations in a number of other cases.

Finally, financial reports to the city are quite generally required, even where no other regular control over the management of library funds exists.

PERSONNEL.—Governmental influence in library personnel matters may be brought about in several ways. By far the most important is the establishment of a civil service system which extends to the library.

The effects of civil service upon library personnel are the subject of a rapidly expanding literature, and are now under close study by the Sub-Committee on Civil Service of the A.L.A. Board on Salaries, Staff, and Tenure. Whatever the detailed provisions, civil service usually operates to limit the library's freedom in personnel matters. Residence require-

⁸Joeckel, *The government*, *op. cit.*, p. 225, note.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 225, note 70.

ments, certification of a few eligibles from whom appointments must be made, rules regarding hours, vacations, sick leaves, hearings in dismissal cases, and retirement systems are common accompaniments of civil service control.

Apart from civil service laws, city influence in library personnel may take any of numerous forms. Residence requirements may be imposed. Uniform city rules governing such matters as vacations and sick leaves are occasionally extended to the library. In some cities, control over personnel matters is an outgrowth of fiscal control. Thus in the New York public libraries, each salary and position in the library constitutes a separate budget item, and changes in the amount or name of the incumbent require approval of the city budget director.

Another form of legislation significantly affecting library personnel is that providing a retirement plan. Governmental retirement schemes exist in some instances quite apart from any civil service system. A recent trend in the direction of extending these programs to cover librarians may be noted, even in a few cases to include staff members of corporation or association libraries, providing all or most of their salaries are paid from public funds. This form of legislative control is one which librarians have most heartily welcomed.

PURCHASING.—The field of purchasing is another in which city-library relations are important, although libraries are as yet commonly exempted from centralized city purchasing. In cases of central control, books and perhaps special library equipment are frequently exempted. Even where *all* library purchases are under the jurisdiction of a city purchasing agent, the library frequently has complete freedom in selecting book dealers. On the other hand, some libraries have voluntarily recognized the advantage of utilizing the city office's facilities.

PROPERTY QUESTIONS.—Ownership of library property is most frequently vested in the governing body. The exception,

as Mr. Joeckel points out, is "usually either a corporation or a body acting in a fiduciary capacity, holding property which has been donated to the library."¹⁰

In a variety of property matters—particularly purchase, lease, and sale of sites, construction and rental of buildings—legislation and city regulations have an important influence on library management. In indicating that a slight majority of municipal library boards has independent authority to purchase sites and erect buildings, Mr. Joeckel emphasizes the fact that

In a rather large number of libraries this point is not specifically covered by the legal instruments under which the library is organized and often, therefore, is in doubt until an actual test is made.¹¹

The intricate problems of law and library-city relations in property matters are further emphasized by Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Githens. In *The American public library building* they point to the necessity for careful study of the library's legal powers, for anticipation of any questions likely to arise regarding condemnation or property titles, and for close cooperation with governmental officials in all steps where action by the latter is required. Some of the dangers, delays, and added expense which otherwise result are indicated.¹²

OTHER CITY-LIBRARY RELATIONS.—In addition to the important areas discussed above, there are numerous others in which legislation and administrative procedures occasionally have a significant effect upon library management.

In some cases, the city attorney acts regularly as the legal adviser of the library. This may follow from a legal provision such as in Detroit, where the library may not have or employ any attorney except upon recommendation of the corporation counsel.¹³ On the other hand, it may be a purely voluntary

¹⁰Joeckel, *The government*, *op. cit.*, p. 210.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 211.

¹²Joseph L. Wheeler and Alfred Morton Githens, *The American public library building*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), pp. 15f.

¹³*Charter of the city of Detroit*, revised to January 1, 1938. Filed with the secretary of state and in effect June 27, 1938. Chap. XXIII, sec. 7, p. 118.

relationship which the library has found advantageous, as in Chicago.

The fields of building construction, repair and maintenance, and the care and upkeep of library grounds, reveal a variety of relationships. In New York, the central building is repaired and maintained by the city. Library grounds are maintained by a central park department in Washington, D.C.,¹⁴ Dayton, Ohio, and Pasadena. Library janitors are supervised by a city superintendent in Sacramento, while in Albany, janitorial service in one branch library is municipally administered. Major items of construction, alteration, or repair require city approval and perhaps supervision in many cities. Advice in matters such as repair, landscaping, and gardening is, in a number of instances, on a voluntary but regular basis. Whether by law or practice, many libraries have significant contacts along these lines.

The rapid growth of the city planning movement also has decided implications for public libraries. In a few instances, library sites and buildings must receive the approval of the municipal planning agency. This is true, for example, in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. Of greater import, however, are the potentialities of a central planning agency's expert assistance in planning library service. Population surveys for intelligent selection of branch sites have already been employed and additional aid may be a distinct possibility for the future.

IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING THE LAW.—This study has led to the conclusion that many librarians are not familiar with the legislation by which their libraries are governed. In a few cases, libraries have operated directly contrary to law for several years. One library board had been handicapped by the necessity of securing city council approval for every new position and every salary change until a new librarian discovered

¹⁴Because the central library is located in a city park, the grounds are maintained by the National Capital Parks Service.

that the law placed definite authority and responsibility upon the library board in such matters. Upon raising a general question of library law, the investigators in a number of cases precipitated a search through scattered sources in the Reference Department. In one instance, controlling laws previously undiscovered were pointed out.

Librarians who can avail themselves of legal analyses prepared by a state library agency are fortunate, for their task is greatly simplified. State publications of this type are found in some states, although they vary widely in quality. *Library laws of the state of California*, revised periodically by the California State Library, is an outstanding illustration because of its comprehensiveness. Provisions of the state constitution, state statutes, and county and city charters as they relate to all types of public libraries in California are included, while citations to California court decisions relating to libraries, and a detailed index further enhance the publication's usefulness.

Individual libraries have, in some instances, prepared and published their own legal guides. St. Louis, Jacksonville, and Louisville¹⁵ are examples. The Oakland library has prepared a complete index to all general charter provisions having a bearing upon library organization and administration. Certainly a compilation of pertinent legislation should be immediately available in the librarian's office. If analyzed, indexed, and supplemented by decisions of public attorneys and the courts, it is all the more useful.

Knowledge of what law governs the library is important, even though expert legal advice may be obtained regarding its interpretation. The plea of *letting sleeping dogs lie* is

¹⁵In the foreword to *Laws concerning the Louisville free public library*, 1939, Mr. Brigham writes: "Problems of law and official procedure constantly confront a public library. Such problems have been especially frequent, complex, and serious for the Louisville Free Public Library since the Depression beginning in 1929 and the Flood of 1937. . . . The need of bringing together in published form all laws which apply to the Louisville Free Public Library has long been felt."

hardly justification for lack of interest. It is much better to know what legislation is pertinent than to find the library required to conform overnight to some unforeseen condition.

It is also important for the librarian to understand the workings of his various government departments. This should result not only in improved cooperation with services already rendered, but may suggest other city services which the library can use to good advantage. One of the criticisms which can be directed against librarians in their relations with the city is that in too many cases they are ignorant of the city's problems and practices. *Study your city government* is an admonition which the librarian might well take to heart.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Librarians should study the laws under which their library operates and should be thoroughly familiar with the workings of their governmental unit.

2. Free discussion of mutual management problems with city officials could be used to greater advantage. Numerous instances have been found where financial and personnel differences have been solved to the satisfaction of everyone concerned after talking them over frankly and thoroughly. One library feared that the installation of an allotment scheme might prove detrimental to its book-purchasing program. This was brought to the attention of the city manager, and the library's position was stated clearly. An agreement was reached whereby library book funds would be subject to certain modifications in the detailed scheme, thus enabling the library to follow its purchasing program without serious inconvenience. Civil service representatives have indicated the belief that many of the library's difficulties with civil service could be settled after a frank discussion on the part of all concerned. The library officials who have neglected this approach may be surprised at the dividends paid on a few attempts at mutual discussion and understanding.

3. The library can gain much in understanding and good will by providing important library services to city officials.

The realization that the library is aware of the city's problems and is trying to give assistance is in itself enough to improve relations. If, at the same time, the library can make a distinct contribution to the solution of such problems (and most libraries can), so much more has been gained. This should not be regarded as solely the function of a municipal reference library or a separate department, but should include all library services which have a contribution to make.

4. Friendly personal relations with government officials should be developed. One library which has accomplished much in the way of better city-library relations, despite a city management poorly aware of the library's problems, has done so largely through this personal contact. Here not only the librarian, but many other members of his staff as well, know the various city officials personally, and make every effort to maintain friendly relations. Thus when the library seeks assistance, it does so with the way partially paved.

TRENDS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The preceding sections, based largely upon Joeckel's *The government of the American public library*, have summarized some of the effects of legal provisions on library administration. The present section will review briefly some of the current trends in public administration which may play a significant role in determining library-governmental relations of the future. Four major trends seem of particular importance to libraries:

1. Concentration of authority and responsibility for city administration in a single executive.
2. Installation of modern budget and financial procedures.
3. Growth of civil service and progressive personnel practices.
4. Growth of centralized purchasing.

ADMINISTRATION.—The most noticeable evidence of the trend toward concentration of city administrative authority in one executive is, of course, the growing number of council-

manager cities. Since its beginning in 1908, the council-manager plan has spread to over 500 municipalities, or to almost one of every five cities over 10,000 population. During the decade of 1930-1940, the council-manager plan was adopted in 149 municipalities.¹⁶ Also in the mayor-council cities, the concentration of administrative authority in the mayor's position represents a marked trend in the past two decades.¹⁷

There are two questions worthy of note here for libraries. Can the library continue to enjoy the large measure of freedom from central administrative control it has had in the past? Secondly, can the continuation of the board form of library management as against a single legally responsible library executive be justified? If the municipal library board is contrary to the basic trends in city government, its proponents will face these questions even though the effectiveness of the library board has not yet been generally and seriously questioned.¹⁸

FINANCE.—One accompaniment of the strong executive form of city government has been the utilization of modern budget and accounting procedures. From the standpoint of the city government as a whole, the effectiveness of modern financial procedures depends partly upon a large degree of uniformity and centralized control. Inclusion of all city departments, active central budget and accounting agencies, uniform classification of expenditure accounts, and central control over budget execution—all are important ingredients. The effect of this trend upon library management is already evident, and greater changes are in store for the future.

PERSONNEL.—The trend toward the establishment of city civil service schemes has recently been an accelerated one:

In municipal governments from 1883 to 1935, civil service systems were established at the average rate of approximately eight a year.

¹⁶*The municipal yearbook, 1941*, (Chicago: International City Managers' Association, 1941), pp. 250-51.

¹⁷L. D. White, *Trends in public administration*, (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1933), pp. 143ff.

¹⁸For further discussion of this point see chap. III.

Since 1935, however, the number of municipal personnel agencies has grown at the rate of about thirty a year.¹⁹

There is every evidence that civil service agencies will continue to increase, and the question of including the library staff will be raised more and more.

Perhaps more significant, and certainly more promising than the mere extension of civil service, is the marked trend toward revitalizing civil service systems through the services of trained personnel technicians and a progressive program of personnel management. Elements of such a program include careful classification and compensation plans; scientific testing, with oral interviews used where desirable; advancement on merit, with formal measures of such merit utilized; a sound retirement system; and aggressive attention to the vital problem of morale, which involves working conditions, service rules and welfare, in-service training opportunities, employee organizations, and employee-employer relations. As civil service procedures improve, fewer cities will groan under systems which include rigid residential requirements, poorly adapted examinations, and unreasonably difficult removal procedures. More progress has recently been made than is commonly realized, and as it continues, the effects of civil service on the library's staff will vary significantly.

PURCHASING.—Two trends are apparent in the field of municipal purchasing. The first is the tendency to establish a centralized purchasing agency to handle the purchasing of all city materials. The second is the extension of the authority of existing purchasing agencies to include all city departments. With more than 200 cities now practicing centralized purchasing to some degree, there seems every evidence that the practice will increase rather than decrease.²⁰ Careful estimates indicate that from ten to fifteen per cent of the cost of city

¹⁹*The municipal yearbook, 1940*, (Chicago: International City Managers' Association, 1940), p. 98.

²⁰Harvey Walker, *Public administration in the United States*, (New York: Farrar, 1937), p. 263.

materials and supplies can be saved as the result of central buying.²¹

One point should be emphasized regarding all of these trends. In the main they represent the movement toward good government and efficient city administration. Although many cities have poor administrative records, honesty and efficiency are on the upgrade. This is particularly worthy of note, because poor city governments have provided the basis for the antagonism of many librarians toward city control or management. One can certainly sympathize with the librarian who is reluctant to place library personnel and finance under the control of city officials whose record has been one of consistent corruption and inefficiency. There are many examples, however, of instances in which this fear has not been justified. The emphasis should be, therefore, upon actual local conditions rather than upon any generally established policy among librarians, or upon fears which are traditional and which may be unfounded.

THE LIBRARY AND THE COMMUNITY

Governmental control over library management is but one aspect of a larger problem which, phrased by Charles H. Brown, is *isolationism* vs. *cooperation*.²² There is a tendency for the library to go its own way, having little or nothing to do either with city government departments or city educational institutions, and considering itself something entirely separate and apart from the community which it serves. This *isolationism* is found relatively less in those libraries under direct governmental control than in those under remote control.

It does not follow that the library should be brought under city civil service, city accounting, and city purchasing in order to make it a more integral part of the community's activities.

²¹Russell Forbes, *Governmental purchasing*, (New York: Harpers, 1929), p. 16.

²²C. H. Brown, "Educational isolationism and the library," *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XXXV (July, 1941), pp. 405-09.

It is unfortunate, however, that in the past, many libraries have operated in an atmosphere far removed from the community they are serving. This is represented in part by the all too frequent attitude of wishing to have nothing to do whatever with any city services. The danger of carrying such an attitude over into the services of the library is grave. This should be avoided, even at the cost of subjecting the library to certain city management devices which are not of the highest calibre.

Library isolationism has other ramifications as well. Perhaps as much as any single factor it is responsible for the continuance of small inadequate libraries, in place of the development of larger units of service. Instead of taking its true place as a community service, whether that community be in effect a trading area, or a sociological region, the library has commonly kept its sights solely upon its legal boundaries. It has even competed with neighboring libraries to the detriment of both. One step in making the library a true community agency involves an analysis of the pattern of service now in existence and a frank appraisal of the ultimate gains that might result from larger units of service.

The roots of the problem lie deep. They arise out of the fact that in a great many libraries, management, if not actually self-perpetuating, tends to be so in practice. A long tradition of independence and isolationism may have been developed. Librarians and trustees owe it to themselves and to their profession to do all in their power to combat any such tendency. The library must have the "feel" of the community. It must be receptive to everything that is going on in the community. It must make a sincere attempt to study community agencies and make the best possible adaptation of its services. This can rarely be accomplished if the library's attitude is one of aloofness. It involves a breaking down of many long-established prejudices, and the revision of certain fundamental procedures. The ultimate gains, however, should more than offset the immediate cost.

CHAPTER III

THE PLACE OF THE BOARD IN LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

NINE-TENTHS of the public libraries in the United States are managed by boards.¹ This fact makes the problem of board-librarian relations one of paramount importance to librarianship. Much of the responsibility for successful library service depends upon the board, its place in the administration of the library, and its relations with the library staff.

The foremost study of the library board is C. B. Joeckel's *The government of the American public library*.² This book deals primarily with the library board as a governmental agency, and reaches the conclusion that in this capacity the board has made a distinct contribution and deserves to be continued. The present study supports this conclusion.

A complete analysis of the library board, however, must take into account the board as a management or administrative body as distinguished from a governmental body. The arguments for and against an administrative library board are marshalled effectively in A. Miles and L. Martin, *Public administration and the library*.³ The present chapter aims to supplement both the Joeckel study and the Miles-Martin book by presenting evidence regarding the actual participation of the board in library management.

Forty-two libraries were visited for the material here presented. Legislation, by-laws, and other documents were examined from many other libraries, in addition to the professional literature. Evidence on some of the points which fol-

¹C. E. Sherman, "The role of the board in library administration" in C. B. Joeckel ed., *Current issues in library administration*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 49.

²(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935).

³(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941).

low could not be obtained even from all the libraries visited, and hence the number of cases reported varies somewhat.⁴

THE BOARD AND MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

THE THEORY OF BOARD ORGANIZATION.—Both the literature of public administration and of librarianship agree on certain points. In general, single-executive management is preferred to board management, and, in exceptional cases, the burden of proof rests on the advocate of the board form of organization. The public administration viewpoint is typified by the following quotation:

They [boards] will find a function as advisory agencies and as regulators of general policy, even in cases where a responsible single executive will carry out the actual administrative work.⁵

Compare with this statement the generally-accepted viewpoint among librarians as phrased by Dr. Bostwick:

The duties of a library board are simple but comprehensive—to decide on the general policy of the institution, . . . to see that this policy is carried out, employing for the purpose an expert staff, and leaving methods and details to it . . .⁶

Even the most vigorous protagonists, when speaking in favor of the library board, are not thinking of management by the board. They are thinking in terms of general oversight, policy regulation, public relations, and appraisal of management. These are the proper functions of the library board. These, too, are the functions against which the performance of the library board should be judged.

LEGAL POSITION OF THE LIBRARY BOARD.—To anyone familiar with library legislation, it might seem that those responsible for framing library laws had quite a different conception of the functions of the board. In fact, there are almost no examples of library laws which clearly differentiate be-

⁴E.g., five of the libraries visited have no *administrative board*.

⁵J. A. Fairlie in *Encyclopedia of the social sciences*, (New York: Macmillan, 1930), vol. 2, p. 609.

⁶"Relation of library trustees and librarian," *Iowa Library Quarterly*. XIII (April-May-June, 1937), p. 26.

tween the policy-regulating functions of the board and the management functions of the executive. Instead, one commonly finds such phrases as:

The said library shall be in charge of a board of library trustees, who shall purchase the books, magazines, and newspapers and procure the necessary appendages for such library.¹

and,

Boards of library trustees shall have power: . . . seventh—to borrow books from, lend books to and exchange the same with other libraries . . .²

The almost complete absence of any mention of the librarian or executive officer in library laws, leads one to suspect that those responsible for their framing actually expected the board to exercise the powers it was given.

When early library laws were being enacted, there was considerable need for lay exercise of management functions. Libraries were relatively small, and their problems simple. There was no such thing as a librarian with professional education. Hence, it is not surprising to find that almost without exception, early legislation placed the library under a lay board.

There is no evidence, however, to suggest that legislation was enacted with the direct purpose of limiting the authority of a librarian or executive officer. Rather, the early proponents of free library service were especially desirous of removing the library from close municipal control. This is easy to understand if one realizes that graft and corruption were not uncommon in city governments at the time when libraries were being established. And those most earnest in support of free libraries were most opposed to any sort of irregularity. In efforts to give as much independence as possible to library boards, little attention was paid to defining the proper relations between boards and their executive officer. This does not mean that there was to be no place for an executive; it simply means

¹*U. S. statutes at large*, vol. 44, pt. 2, chap. 98, sec. 4.

²*Statutes of California*, 1909, chap. 481, sec. 5.

that it was apparently not thought necessary to define that place in the library laws at the time.

Later legislation is a little different in this respect, for at least certain laws now recognize that there is to be a chief executive. This is often true where home-rule charters have been adopted and the library has been written into the charter. For example, the California state library law mentions the librarian only to say that the board shall have power to prescribe the duties and powers of the librarian.⁹ But the charter of the City and County of San Francisco states:

The librarian shall be the chief executive of the department. He shall appoint, and at his pleasure may discipline and remove, all employees of the library department.¹⁰

It may be questioned whether the board, under existing legislation, can delegate to the librarian certain of its legal responsibilities. The answer to this is complicated by the fact that the legal requirements affecting library boards are written into forty-eight different state laws, plus numerous city charters and ordinances. Delegation might be possible in one instance but not in another. In general, it can be said that in a large number of cases the board does not have to act formally upon many of the details it now considers. In Yonkers, N.Y., Article VI of the by-laws outlines the authority of the librarian as follows:

The Librarian shall be the active executive and administrative officer of the corporation and shall be charged with the direction of its activities and of the measures for the accomplishment of its corporate purposes in accordance with policies determined by the Board of Trustees.¹¹

In some states, it is true that the board has legal responsibility for a great many details. An example of how some of

⁹*Statutes of California*, 1909, chap. 481, sec. 5.

¹⁰*Charter of the city and county of San Francisco*, (San Francisco: John S. Dunnigan, Clerk, 1935), p. 24. See also charters for Long Beach, San Diego, and Sacramento, where there is no *managing* board.

¹¹*By-laws Yonkers Public Library*, (Yonkers, N.Y., 1936), p. 8.

these details may be delegated is afforded by the Chicago Public Library:

. . . the Board has already intrusted its administrative officers with very broad authority in two important particulars. The secretary prepares all pay rolls without specific approval by the Board, acting under authority of a single resolution of the Board passed once each year. Likewise, as already noted, the librarian and assistant librarian are authorized to make appointments to the staff as provided by the allotment schedule which determines the number of assistants in departments and branches.¹²

It may well require careful legal analysis to determine whether an Illinois library board charged with "exclusive control of the expenditure of all moneys . . ." and given the power "to appoint a suitable librarian and necessary assistants . . ."¹³ could delegate these responsibilities to an executive officer. But it is certainly true that the practice of the Chicago Public Library could be copied in more instances than at present and blanket resolutions adopted which for all practical purposes would answer the problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—I. It is probably not desirable to advocate wholesale revision of library laws to recognize the librarian as the true executive authority. But where it can be done provisions should be incorporated defining more clearly the status of the librarian, and removing from the board's authority action on details of management.

2. Library boards should delegate more responsibility to the librarian than they now do. Boards and librarians should study existing laws and, where possible, modify their practice to remove some of the details of management from the board's responsibility.

3. Trustees and lay leaders can perform a valuable service by undertaking, where feasible, revision of library laws to recognize the librarian as the chief executive. In many li-

¹²C. B. Joeckel and L. Carnovsky, *A metropolitan library in action*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 84.

¹³*Illinois revised statutes*, chap. 81, sec. 5.

braries, the approved relationship exists, except that antiquated library laws still burden the board with a mass of detail. Here is an opportunity for public-spirited trustees to make an important contribution to library administration and at the same time clear the board's decks for more effective and constructive action in community interpretation, policy regulation, and appraisal.

BOARD BY-LAWS AND RULES.—Board rules and by-laws in fifty-one libraries were examined to study their effect upon board management. In ten instances, these scarcely go beyond the usual matters of board organization, meetings, and order of business. To these should be added three libraries which do not have by-laws in any current form. Twenty-eight sets of the by-laws go into some detail regarding management, largely in giving certain powers or responsibilities to committees. Thirteen others were found which outline management matters in rather complete detail.

By-laws represent at best an imperfect indication of board operations. Many boards which have up-to-date by-laws do not follow them consistently. Many of the by-laws examined clearly contain more details of management than they should, and in fact, more details than any board, unless full-time, could oversee carefully. Here it is apparent that by-laws reflect library legislation.

Several boards have operated either without by-laws or with by-laws which are obsolete and ignored. Since board members change, and boards should act as a body according to established principles, it is well to have those principles formally adopted and available for frequent consultation. Many librarians have testified to the value of having board rules and by-laws to guide the board in its deliberations.

Whether in formal by-laws or less formal rules or principles, the relation between the board and the librarian should be clearly stated. This is particularly helpful as orientation for the new board member and, in certain instances, has headed

e board off when it seemed to be proceeding in the wrong rection. An excellent statement of this sort is contained in e suggested by-laws found in *The library trustee*:

The librarian shall be considered the executive officer of the ard and shall have sole charge of the administration of the library der the direction and review of the board. The librarian shall be ld responsible for the care of the buildings and equipment, for the ployment and direction of the staff, for the efficiency of the rary's service to the public, and for the operation of the library der the financial conditions set forth in the annual budget."

There seems little justification for by-laws (there are ex-mples, unfortunately) which either do not mention the li-arian, or merely give the board permission to appoint a rarian. Equally unfortunate, is the practice of writing into e by-laws overly-detailed statements of management pro-ure, as for example:

The Buildings and Grounds Committee shall . . . prepare plans d specifications, execute contracts, and supervise the construction such [new] buildings . . .

The Committee [on Administration] shall . . . recommend such ditions or changes both in appointments and pay, as the Committee ems best . . .

The Book Committee, subject to the approval of the Board, shall ve charge of the selection, purchase, exchange, and binding of oks and periodicals . . . The Librarian shall . . . assist the Book mmittee in the selection and purchase of books . . .

The Committee on Finance shall . . . audit all bills and accounts fore they are paid, and shall approve all such as have been duly thorized and first approved by the President and Treasurer.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Board by-laws, or rules, should ve a clear statement delegating management responsibility the librarian.

2. All details of management procedure should be taken out by-laws.

These two recommendations would put into actual writing e relationship which not only should exist but, in many in-ances, does exist. Few boards are now managing the library,

but old by-laws, in a great many instances, help to maintain the fiction that they are.

BOARD COMMITTEES.—The presence or absence of standing committees, and the extent to which they are active, is a good indication of board activity. Of seventy-four libraries, only four report that their board functions without committees. The number of committees ranges from one to eight, with four the most common number. Table 2 gives the number of committees in seventy-four libraries for which information was available through reports or by-laws.

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF STANDING COMMITTEES OF LIBRARY BOARDS

Number of Committees	Number of Libraries
None.....	5
One.....	6
Two.....	7
Three.....	19
Four or five.....	29
Six or seven.....	6
Eight.....	2
Total.....	74

While the presence of standing committees may have some significance, it is no final indication of actual activity. In many libraries, committees have had no meetings for years.

In twenty-nine of the libraries visited, it was found that:

In eleven libraries, the committees rarely meet.

In seven libraries, the committees meet only when needed, usually on call of the librarian.

In eight libraries, the committees meet often, to discuss major problems and approve some routine matters.

In three libraries, certain committees meet regularly, actually to manage certain phases of the library.¹⁵

¹⁵One of these three is an executive committee which is more comparable to a library board itself.

This probably suggests more committee activity than is typical. Four of the eight libraries where committees meet often are large boards. There it is almost essential to have committees, if board action is to be taken on all items that the board, through law or tradition, believes that it must consider.

The committee system appears to be a means of apportioning board activity rather than a means of increasing it. Several librarians report that the use of committees is extremely valuable in getting board members interested in and informed about the library. On the other hand, committees in the past have occasionally been the cause of board interference in the details of administration.

Three reasons are commonly given for the appointment of standing committees:

1. Committees are a necessity if the board is to pass on all of the matters that it should consider.
2. Committees are useful in getting board members more informed about and interested in the library.
3. Committees give librarians valuable advice and assistance.

Each of these reasons may be examined briefly.

Standing committees seem to be necessary to enable some library boards to act on all the matters that are brought to the board. Hence, it may be questioned whether all such matters should be brought to the board. In a few cases, perhaps they should. But there are more examples where committees are a device (in the words of one person) "to enable the board to do more efficiently things it should not do." For some boards with many members, committees may be needed, even to undertake preliminary consideration of certain policies. But, if committee action is essential to transact business, boards (with possibly a few exceptions) are concerning themselves with many more details than they should.

The second reason-for standing committees revolves around the problem of what board members should be informed about and interested in. If one wishes to interest board members in how much money a given staff member makes, how many

copies of a recent novel to buy, or how many new reading room chairs should be bought, then committee membership may afford an excellent opportunity. If, on the other hand, one wishes to interest board members in the general salary level, book selection policies, or a long-range building program, committees are not the answer. These are matters upon which every board member should be informed. There is sound reasoning behind the dictum that any matter requiring board attention should have the attention of the entire board.

There are so many examples of helpful advice from standing committees that the third reason is difficult to appraise. Many librarians report valuable advice and assistance, particularly in matters of finance, buildings, and publicity. A not inconsiderable by-product of such advice is a better understanding and appreciation of the library on the part of the committee members. If one studies such instances carefully, however, it usually develops that such assistance is due to the special talent and interests of one member. And one does not need a publicity committee to get the advice of a newspaperman board member. Furthermore, it is not a long step from committee advice on publicity matters to committee management of the library's publicity efforts. Where special talents are present on the board, the librarian can utilize these just as effectively by dealing with the member directly. Furthermore, this direct relation places such dealings entirely upon the plane of advice and assistance. One might not always be able to distinguish between the *suggestions* of Mr. Jones and the *directions* of Chairman Jones.

Some library boards have abolished standing committees because they found the routine onerous and the meetings dull. If other libraries would follow suit, they might do away with the deadening effect of such meetings on committee members. Undoubtedly, many members now put up with such meetings and become less keen board members as a result. There are other ways of enlisting real board interest in important mat-

ters; the Montclair Free Public Library affords one of many illustrations.¹⁶

Where a vexing problem requires more study than the entire board can give, a special committee may be the answer. Meetings need last only as long as the problem is unsettled, and there need be no tedious transaction of routine business. When the job is finished, the committee is discharged, and the committee members have perhaps been given a keener insight into some library problems. Furthermore, there can be adequate safeguards against continuing the committee indefinitely and making it, in effect, a standing committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—Libraries should abolish standing committees unless local conditions clearly make such committees necessary. This would mean that the entire board would consider all matters and operate as a committee of the whole. It would require both the delegation of many more matters to the librarian and a new emphasis upon the legitimate policy-regulating functions of the board. Better use of the talents of each would be possible, and more efficient administration should result.

BOARD CONCERN WITH PERSONNEL.—Library boards concern themselves with a great many personnel matters. In the libraries visited it was found that:

- In five instances, the board gives almost no attention to personnel;
- In six instances, the board gives attention only to policies;
- In nine instances, only major matters are considered, such as appointments, promotions, and salary increases;
- In thirteen instances, all personnel matters are referred to the board, but their approval is often perfunctory.

Within these groupings, there are, of course, wide variations, but it seems clear that relatively few of these boards are actually managing personnel. Even where all personnel matters are referred to the board, this is done more because of

¹⁶M. C. Quigley and W. E. Marcus, *Portrait of a library*, (New York: Appleton-Century, 1936), pp. 45-53.

past practice than because of real need. In one library, even though personnel matters are reported *en masse* for board action, the members often complain of the necessity of having to pass on all the details.

In the libraries which report no board action, meetings are usually held irregularly and very infrequently. Where this is true, the annual meeting usually produces action directly or indirectly affecting personnel; for instance, the adoption of a budget.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—I. Library boards should concern themselves solely with broad policies in personnel matters. There is no justification (legal necessity excepted) for board action on any personnel matters except broad policies. To expect an administrator to manage an organization without full control over personnel is folly. No executive can be held responsible for success or failure unless he can choose and place his staff as he sees best.

2. Within the framework of broad policies adopted by the board, the librarian should be free to exercise his administrative discretion. One can and should expect the executive to act according to policies and principles which the legal authority has set up with his advice. A fair and efficient selection procedure should be established, and this is an important concern of the board. But within this system, final authority should rest with the librarian, and there should never be any question of the board's approval. Likewise, a fair promotion system should be established, but the librarian should be the one to say who qualifies best for a given advancement. Where this relation cannot exist, the need is for a new executive and not for board management. Where the board under law must act on such matters as appointments and promotions, it should do so by blanket resolution.

FINANCE.—In only seven of the libraries visited is there what might be termed close board control of finance. By this

is meant approval of detailed budget items, individual approval of expenditure items, real discussion and consideration of minor budget changes. In three libraries, such control is due in large part to a separate financial officer responsible directly to the board.

In the great majority of the libraries (twenty-four), the board gives careful attention to major financial matters. In a typical example, for instance: the board takes an active part in revising the budget, studies monthly or quarterly reports of expenditures, discusses and approves changes in the budget, and handles the investment of special funds. In several other libraries, every financial transaction must go through the board, although such action is largely routine. In only one library is there little or no concern with finances other than approving the budget at the beginning of the year.

Two general conclusions are in order: (1) The board seems to concern itself a great deal with library finances. (2) There are a great many financial matters which are acted upon by the board, but in many cases such action is perfunctory or routine.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Boards should see that a sound financial system is adopted and employed. They should study carefully the library's needs, decide on what financial policies are to be adopted, and then take an active part in obtaining the necessary funds. They should require periodic reports of the librarian to see that the program is being carried out, and should see that an independent audit is made yearly.

2. Details of financial management should be the province of the librarian. He should be held responsible for financial management and expected to come to the board for action only when some unforeseen circumstance has arisen. This conception of the board's place in financial management presupposes a sound financial system and a willingness on the part of boards to delegate to the librarian details which they now act upon.

PURCHASES.—Few library boards concern themselves with the details of library purchases:

Twenty libraries report no concern with individual purchases. (Exceptionally expensive or unforeseen items would be considered, of course).

Eight libraries report nominal but perfunctory consideration of purchases.

Five libraries report actual consideration and approval of individual items.

This would indicate that most boards leave all purchasing details to their librarians, even if, in a few cases, they are asked officially to approve items either individually or by periodic list. That is to say, there is little evidence that boards are actually managing the library's purchasing, despite legal provisions empowering the board to purchase.

RECOMMENDATION.—The librarian should be given authority to make all purchases except those of major importance which are not provided for in the budget.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION.—In two of the libraries visited, building maintenance is cared for by other departments not under the control of the librarian. In a certain sense, this is direct board control. The majority of boards (twenty-five), however, have little to do with care of buildings except where major repairs or alterations are needed. Of the five libraries which report consideration of details, at least two are due to the special talents of some board member in whom the librarian has confidence.

Here again, there seems to be little or no board management. Most librarians report that they go right ahead with problems of building maintenance without ever consulting the board. In a few cases where routine approval is obtained, some slightly annoying delays have occurred but these have rarely been serious.

OTHER PROBLEMS OF BOARD FUNCTIONS.—Only nine libraries report any considerable disagreement between the

board and the librarian over specific proposals. Twenty-five libraries report that the board uniformly acts favorably on recommendations of the librarian. Of the nine where disagreements are reported, two emphasized that these were entirely in the past, and two stated that the differences were not at all serious. Most of the other differences were sincere differences of opinion and not attempts to interfere.

Thirty libraries report that there have been no attempts on the part of the board to interfere in management. Two report some attempts on the part of new members, soon corrected, while six report that there had been some interference in the past. In the latter case, without exception there had been no attempts in recent years.

An attempt was made to judge the extent to which the board recognized the librarian as the chief executive and was careful not to usurp his functions. In only three libraries was there any considerable doubt on this point, and this could be attributed more to things the board did which it should have entrusted to the librarian, than to any attempt to undermine the librarian's authority.

No attempt has been made to obtain a careful analysis of librarians' comments on their boards, their activities, and their interests. However, certain opinions have been encountered so frequently that they are worthy of brief mention. Among the most frequently heard are three which stand out:

1. Relations with the board occupy a very great share of many librarians' time and thought.
2. The necessity of board action on many details takes an undue amount of board time, results in some needless delay, and tends to crowd out the proper board function of policy discussion and regulation.
3. It is extremely difficult to get board members genuinely interested in the library, and to obtain careful study of important library policies.

As pointed out previously, one of the most frequently heard justifications of the committee system is based on this last

point. Through standing committees it has been possible to give some board members (and indeed in some libraries all board members) a better understanding and appreciation of particular library problems.

In only one case was there a board which felt itself actually responsible for management details. And though this attitude was phrased in the words "individually and collectively responsible for management," the board's performance didn't entirely bear this out. Instead, the common attitudes of boards may be characterized by such statements as:

a backer-upper, to control and direct policies

advisory

don't do much directing now

tradition of management by librarian

Board has legal responsibility—librarian, administrative authority to *represent* community but not manage

The Board is to determine policies, promote service, and secure adequate funds.

In this respect, the prevailing opinion seems to follow clearly the accepted theory phrased as follows in *The library trustee*:

The board of trustees is the *legislative* or *policy-determining* body for the library. Its primary concern is with formulating the program of service and with supplying the means for carrying it out . . .

The librarian *carries out* the details of the program according to the adopted policy, in some cases referring items to the board for approval before action, but as a rule applying the policies to the details of the plan, and only reporting to the board on progress or on completion of the plan."

OTHER LAY GROUPS

Some consideration should be given to certain groups whose purpose is largely either to secure advice for the library or certain of its services, or to promote wider community interest and understanding.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY.—The primary purpose of Friends of the Library groups seems to be to stimulate gifts to the library. A by-product is often found to be increased under-

"A. G. Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

standing and appreciation of the library, but this is generally more or less incidental to the purpose of raising funds. Judging the results of such groups is difficult.

If community advice and interest are the important things, a different procedure seems more likely to yield satisfactory results. In one library, the plan of having various advisory committees is being considered. Thus, there would be no one advisory group, but, for example, an advisory committee of artists and musicians to give advice to the library's art department. A committee of business men might be set up to advise the library as to the desirable organization and activity of a business branch or business information department. Such committees may well be Library committees of existing organizations.

Such a plan has already been tried with some success in Providence Public Library with respect to branch advisory committees. For each of its larger branches, Providence has branch advisory committees appointed by the board of trustees and including the branch librarian. The powers of these committees are advisory only, and there has been only one case of any attempt to usurp authority.¹⁸ Some of these committees have done little, but, on the whole, the results have been very satisfactory. The committees were particularly helpful in getting up petitions to ask the city to grant additional funds to reopen two branches which were closed for lack of funds, and to prevent the closing of others. It is worthy of note that the survey of the Chicago Public Library recommended that experiments be made with the appointment of branch advisory committees.¹⁹

It seems reasonable to expect that branch advisory committees or advisory committees to special departments would

¹⁸C. E. Sherman, "When a library needs a friend," *Library Journal*, LXII (May 15, 1937), pp. 409-13.

¹⁹Joeckel and Carnovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

produce better results than a single Friends of the Library group. Interest in the library would be easier to promote because there is already a common ground upon which such interest could be fostered. Furthermore, advice and assistance to the library would be along lines of special interest on the part of the committee members, and therefore would likely be more profitable. Here, too, would be an excellent means of securing expert advice for the library without running any risk of interference or control.

Several librarians believe that such special committees offer great possibilities for community advice and interpretation, and are drawing up plans for their establishment. These developments will be watched with great interest for they offer interesting possibilities for success.

ADVISORY BOARDS.—Five libraries included in this study either have no library board or have a board which is purely advisory. San Diego and Pasadena are examples of libraries with advisory boards; Santa Monica has an advisory board which does not function actively; and in Sacramento and Long Beach there is no board.

In all of these cities, there have been friendly relations between the library and the city. Furthermore, the relations of the librarian and the advisory board in the two cities having such a board have been pleasant and helpful. Important matters upon which the librarian wishes advice may be brought to such boards, and often able assistance is obtained. However, the boards do not approve minor details such as is commonly found in other public libraries. In all of these cases, the librarians have reported that they do not wish to go back to the board-management type of government. Too much stock cannot be placed in such a few cases, but it does remind one that where there is an honest and efficient city government, the library may not suffer by becoming directly a department of the city instead of a board-managed institution.

LIBRARIAN-BOARD RELATIONS

At least for the larger libraries, conflicts between the board and librarian receive attention out of all proportion to their importance. One sometimes receives the impression that the board is a body which constantly tries to interfere with the librarian's job and is continually handicapping the librarian in his management of the library. Such cases are the exception rather than the rule, for, as pointed out before, most librarians report exceptionally fine relations with their boards. Suggestions of certain desirable procedures, however, have been received from a number of librarians and are worth repeating. They are presented not with the aim of giving a picture of board interference, but in a sincere effort to improve librarian-board relations.

Several librarians report that when they accepted their present positions they utilized the opportunity to establish a sound working relationship between the board and the librarian. Appointment to a new job seems to be an excellent opportunity for all concerned to establish the limits of the librarian's authority and the board's concern with management. Not all librarians will have such an opportunity, but where the opportunity arises, it might prove desirable to make use of it.

Some librarians report excellent results from a written statement of the relations between the board and the librarian. This may be done either through board by-laws or through separate policies adopted by the board, but the advantage of having such a statement in writing seems obvious. An excellent example is afforded by the Montclair Public Library. As stated in the by-laws:

The librarian shall be the active executive and administrative officer of the corporation and shall be charged with the direction of its activities and of the measures for the accomplishment of its corporate purposes, subject, however, to the supervision and control of the Board of Trustees.²⁰

²⁰By-laws of the Montclair Free Public Library, p. 3. See also statement in Yonkers By-laws, p. 24 of this chapter.

In addition to the by-laws, the Montclair board has adopted certain policies of organization and administration. In this statement are found such phrases as:

. . . no one shall be appointed to the library staff except upon the recommendation of the librarian.

All promotions shall be recommended by the librarian.

Transfers, assignment of duties, fixing hours of service, and similar matters shall rest with the librarian.²¹

Even where this relation exists in practice, it would seem desirable to formalize it in writing. This would put the board clearly on record as recognizing the administrative authority of the librarian, and would leave no room for doubt as to who is responsible for management details. While such a statement is particularly helpful to the new board member, it serves as a constant reminder to the veterans.

The most effective board-librarian relations are found in the libraries where the librarian keeps the board so well-supplied with interesting policy matters that it has little or no time for details. This requires a great deal of time and thought on the part of the library staff. If librarians are sincere in their feeling that the board should confine itself largely to policy decisions, then it is up to the librarian to see that the board is well-supplied with such matters; and for a board which in the past has acted upon many details, this may be a difficult job. The ultimate result, however, should be worth all the effort that can be put into it.

If both librarian and board approach their job with full sympathy and understanding, there should be few serious differences. But if the board is to be anything more than a group of stuffed shirts, there will undoubtedly be sincere differences of opinion. What can be done by the librarian when such instances arise? As long as the board is the final legal authority, its action must be accepted with good spirit. One librarian reports considerable success with the practice of ask-

²¹*Policies of organization and administration*, Montclair Free Public Library, Quigley and Marcus, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

ing that such policies be considered experimental. This gives the librarian an opportunity to report further and does not commit the library to a policy which might in the long run prove disadvantageous.

There are several ways of minimizing the importance of details, even if the board must act upon such matters. In one library, all such details are included in a fairly comprehensive report by the librarian. This report is read in its entirety, and board action taken on the report as a whole. In this way, board members have an opportunity to go back and discuss individual matters if they think them important, but in the main the procedure has been simply to adopt the report as a whole. Another librarian found a slightly different procedure helpful. The first items on the board's docket were policy matters which were discussed at length. Action which had to be taken on the details was reserved to the last of the meeting. By that time, the board was usually willing to pass such matters as routine rather than discuss individual items. This approach depends in large part upon the librarian's ability to supply the board with enough provocative ideas and major problems.

A few librarians have attempted to keep matters away from the board, even after the board had expressed an interest in such matters. Fortunately, such instances are relatively rare. There can be no successful partnership in the carrying out of a library program unless each partner is willing to take the other into full confidence.

The problem of obtaining board interest and understanding is a difficult one. Several suggestions received from librarians may be worth reporting. In the Montclair Public Library the librarian each month attempts to present a report on some broader aspect of the library's service. At one month's meeting a report was given on the subject of "Library Service in Elementary Schools." At another meeting, there was a report on "Cooperation Between the Public Library and the Libraries of the Junior and Senior High Schools of Montclair."

The Louisville Public Library has recently developed an interesting new procedure. At each board meeting, a department head or branch librarian presents a ten-minute written report describing the work problems for her organization unit. The form for these reports is worked out in advance, so they are rather uniform. In addition to stimulating board interest, this practice has the advantage of giving board members the opportunity to become better acquainted with library staff members.

Still another useful device has been the utilization of special talents of individual board members. Perhaps the most common example is the use of a newspaperman for advice in publicity matters; a banker on the board may advise the librarian on financial matters; or a board member who has had experience in building maintenance and repair may be a valuable source of ideas on such problems in the library. This seems to be an excellent way to get interest and attention from the individual board members, and at the same time not run the risk of encouraging the board to take over management details.

Where satisfactory board-librarian relations have not been established, the trouble may often be traced to the librarian. As long as the board system is in effect and the librarian must operate under it, it goes without saying that much of his best thought and judgment should go to establishing effective relations with the library board. There are no inherent obstacles to smooth relations, as demonstrated by numerous libraries. Such relations, however, do not just happen, and are usually the result of confidence and intelligence on the part of both parties.

SHOULD THE LIBRARY BOARD BE RETAINED

This is not the place to review the controversy over whether or not libraries should have boards. However, information on the board's share in library management is pertinent to a dis-

cussion of this question. Hence, a few general conclusions will be offered—not in the hope of settling the question, but in the hope of contributing additional information.

First, the board system as it is now operating requires much time, energy, and, in some cases, expense. Many matters which the librarian could intelligently decide within a few moments have to be brought before the board and discussed thoroughly by the various board members. The amount of time which the board gives to such matters is not always great, and frequently the contribution which the board makes is eminently worth-while. But, too many library boards devote almost all their time to minor routine matters which the librarian could handle more efficiently.

Second, the failure of the library board to delegate responsibility for administrative action to librarian is in part responsible for the failure of the librarian to delegate further authority to his department heads and assistants. If the librarian is expected to bring all matters to the board, he cannot permit such matters to be settled by department heads without his approval or action. In at least one library, this has resulted in failure to delegate as much responsibility and authority as the librarian would like.

Third, library boards which perform management activities usually neglect their proper and more important functions. Numerous examples could be cited of boards which lack time to act on all the details which they feel must be considered. In such cases, it seems self-evident that major problems are neglected or, if discussed, are considered sketchily and without that careful and unhurried analysis which is so essential. Library finances would be more nearly adequate if boards devoted as much time and thought to ways and means of securing adequate funds, as they do to minute details of financial operation. All the time which lay boards can spare could profitably be spent on policy-regulation, community interpretation, and appraisal of results.

Fourth, it is often stated that it would be difficult to get a board interested in the library if it did not concern itself with the details of library services. There is no conclusive evidence on this point, but there are at least a few examples which could be labeled as exceptions if one accepts the rule. Emphasizing the advisory function of the board would serve to focus attention on its responsibility for appraising results and recommending improvements. Its attention could thus be released from discussing minor details, and devoted to constructive criticism and analysis.

The important question is not whether the library board should be retained. There are clear cases where it should, as well as cases where it should not. The question of real importance is how the library board can best serve the interests of its community. Here the answer seems clear. The library board can best serve its community by serving as an agency for the discussion and regulation of general policy, by stimulating and encouraging its professional staff, by becoming the library's most thoughtful and constructive advisor, by becoming a powerful agency for community interpretation, and by selecting a competent librarian and entrusting all library operations to him and his staff.

CHAPTER IV

THE LIBRARY AND ITS EXECUTIVES

IN ANY ORGANIZATION consisting of several persons there must be delegation of responsibility and authority. Authority for management of the library should be vested in the librarian. The librarian in turn should delegate certain duties and responsibilities to his assistants. In a large organization there will, therefore, be certain levels in the administrative organization. This chapter discusses principally the top levels, i.e., the librarian and his immediate subordinates.

It is not easy to get a complete picture of the way in which the librarian and his executives function. The relationship that exists in theory is often not carried out in practice. The personalities and abilities of the persons involved are frequently of more importance than the organizational pattern. This presents obvious difficulties for the investigator with limited time and resources. Hence, the following discussion aims primarily at contributing to the subject rather than exhausting it.

AUTHORITY OF THE LIBRARIAN

LEGAL POWERS OF THE LIBRARIAN.—Except for libraries which have no board, a statement in law of the powers or duties of the librarian is rarely found. Instead, the only mention of the librarian is frequently in such provisions as:

. . . said board shall have the power to appoint a suitable librarian and necessary assistants . . . etc.¹

There are a few other examples where the librarian is legally empowered, for example, to

. . . receive payment of fines and impositions collectible under the rules adopted by the board of directors.²

But even these instances are rare.

¹*Illinois revised statutes*, chap. 81, sec. 5.

²*Charter laws and ordinances of the city of Worcester*, (Worcester: Blanchard Press, 1911), pp. 101-02.

Three exceptions are San Francisco, Indianapolis, and the District of Columbia. The District of Columbia public library law gives the librarian "the care and superintendence of said library." In addition, the librarian "shall appoint such assistants as the board shall deem necessary," and "shall be responsible to the board of trustees for the impartial enforcement of all the rules and regulations lawfully established."³ This is quite similar to the Indiana law governing the Indianapolis Public Library, where the librarian shall:

1. Have charge of all libraries under the control of the board.
2. Recommend to the board all books for purchase.
3. Employ and discharge all assistants—subject to the limitations in the act.
4. Report monthly and annually, or oftener.⁴

While these are not comprehensive definitions of authority, they do give to the librarian certain definite responsibilities. And there is at least the implication that the librarian is the chief executive officer.

Under most laws, the librarian could be either a true executive or a glorified clerk. Hence, as far as laws are concerned, there is no reason why there cannot be as many different types of librarian positions as there are librarians.

RECOMMENDATION.—Library laws should designate the chief librarian as the library's executive officer. He should be given legal responsibility for management of the library's affairs, with or without the supervision of a board as the case may be. This need not, and perhaps should not, be an exhaustive listing of the librarian's powers—even a well-phrased sentence might suffice.

BOARD BY-LAWS.—Board by-laws and rules of forty-nine libraries were analyzed to see what picture they gave of the authority and responsibility of the librarian. The results of this analysis are given in Table 3.

³*U. S. statutes at large*, vol. 44, pt. 2, chap. 98, sec. 5.

⁴*Indiana acts of 1931*, chap. 94, sec. 9.

TABLE 3
AUTHORITY OF THE LIBRARIAN AS DEFINED IN
BOARD BY-LAWS AND RULES

Extent of Librarian's Authority as Defined	Number of Libraries
Not mentioned	8
Mentioned only as keeping records or minutes	1
Limited as to authority	16
Given executive authority by a general phrase or paragraph	17
Given specific authority over certain matters	7
Total	49

Less than half the by-laws examined clearly defined the librarian's responsibility. Most of these did so by a general paragraph, an example of which is from the Newark by-laws:

The librarian shall be the executive officer of the board of trustees, and under them have the general charge of the library and of all persons employed therein. He shall be held responsible to the board for the proper management of the library, for the preservation and care of its property, and for the discipline and efficiency of its service.⁵

Other by-laws are similar to the by-laws of the Queens Borough Public Library, where several specific duties of the librarian are listed:

1. Subject to approval of the board and committees, have "general control and direction of employees, business affairs, and administration of the Library system."
2. Communicate to the board and require the attendance of department heads at committee meetings.
3. "Shall be held responsible for the proper performance" of duties of heads of departments.
4. Prepare annual report.
5. Attend all meetings of the board and committees of the board, including budget hearings⁶

Board by-laws are more definite than laws in designating the librarian as the executive officer of the library. And they furnish good evidence of the intent of most boards to so re-

⁵Article IV, Public Library, Newark, By-laws, typewritten copy, pp. 2-3.

⁶Article XIV, *By-laws of the Queens Borough Public Library*, (Jamaica, 1939), pp. 11-12.

gard the librarian. But, as is the case with laws, it is apparent that there is no uniform picture, and within certain limits there are all sorts of variations possible regarding the position of librarian.

It is perhaps an open question as to how much attention should be given to a description of the librarian's responsibilities in by-laws or rules. There may be no great need for a detailed enumeration of the powers of the librarian. On the other hand, by-laws and rules offer an excellent place to put on record the management responsibilities of the librarian. If the librarian cannot be given this authority for management, the remedy is to get a new librarian and not limit the powers of his office.

RECOMMENDATION.—Board by-laws should clearly designate the librarian as the chief executive with responsibility and authority for the management of the library. They afford an excellent opportunity to outline the librarian's major duties and to delineate a sound relationship between functions of the board and functions of the executive.

WHAT DOES THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN DO?

The analysis of a day's work of a chief librarian usually affords an interesting picture of activities. But present evidence suggests only that there is almost no uniformity from library to library regarding what the librarian does. In a recent discussion, one librarian reported that he had little or nothing to do with book selection, while another reported that this was one of his most important functions. One librarian concerned himself a great deal with personnel matters, while another left personnel matters almost entirely to assistants.⁷

Size of the library is a factor of major importance in determining what the librarian does. The librarian of the large library can rarely be the technical expert that his colleague in

⁷Librarians of Large Public Libraries Round Table, December, 1940.

the smaller library can. He may be even more expert, but so much of his time will be taken up with matters of finance, building, and personnel, that he will have little time to devote to details, for example, of cataloging and classification. The amount of time the librarian needs to spend on administrative problems will inevitably increase as the size of the library increases. Correspondingly, the need for knowledge of techniques diminishes as one ascends the administrative hierarchy and especially as the size of the enterprise increases.

Visits to several libraries and interviews with many staff members make it clear that the three most important concerns of most librarians are: personnel, finance, and relations with the board. This is true whether one accepts the judgment of librarians themselves, the testimony of other staff members, or impressions of persons outside the library staff. In the few instances where any one of these three activities is not regarded as most important, there is usually some contributing factor: personnel details may be delegated to an assistant librarian; board relations are of minor importance, because of an inactive board; a separate financial officer or an unusually active finance committee of the board takes over many financial problems.

Next in order of importance are book selection and public relations, especially community contacts, lectures, and meetings. In about half the libraries, these occupy a large share of the librarian's time. Here again, the variation is great. In book selection, for example, one librarian reported that he never saw most of the library's book orders, while another one maintained major responsibility for certain subject fields, and personally reviewed and approved all other book orders.

Finally, librarians perform a miscellany of activities which seem in the main to follow no general pattern, but depend entirely upon the local situation: purchasing, building maintenance and repair, and supervision of branches and extension work. Librarian concern with these activities seems to be

largely due to the absence of a department head in charge. Thus, where there is no building superintendent or head janitor, building problems take much of the librarian's time. Again, if there is no superintendent of branches, branch work falls to the librarian, and constitutes an important part of his duties.

TABLE 4
MEDIAN PERCENTAGE OF LIBRARIAN'S TIME SPENT ON
VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

Type of Work	Median per cent	Range per cent
Administration.....	45.8	20.6 to 100.0
Acquisition of material.....	9.9	0 to 78.12
Public relations.....	7.8	0 to 22.5
Miscellaneous (staff meetings, professional reading, attending conferences).....	6.7	0 to 29.9
Unproductive time (vacations, etc.).....	4.9	0 to 28.3
General office work.....	3.9	0 to 19.3
Reference work.....	.5	0 to 13.2
Assisting readers.....	.2	0 to 6.1
Care of buildings and collections.....	.2	0 to 33.1
Auxiliary agencies.....	.05	0 to 6.2
Circulation work.....	0.0	0 to 49.5
Unclassified or special.....	0.0	0 to 15.1
Cataloging and classification.....	0.0	0 to 10.15

Through the cooperation of Miss Emma V. Baldwin, Executive Secretary, and Mr. William E. Marcus, Chairman of the Committee for the Study of Cost Accounting in Public Libraries, additional evidence was compiled concerning the way librarians spend their time. This consisted of time records kept for four months which distributed the librarians' hours among thirteen different types of activities. The thirty-seven libraries studied ranged in size from San Diego, California, with a population of 147,995, to Gloucester, Massachusetts, population 24,204, and Greenwich, Connecticut, population 5,981. Table 4 gives the median percentage of the librarian's time spent on the various activities. Unfortunately, it was not possible to break down the time of librarians into such activi-

ties as personnel, finance, and board relations. Most of such activities are undoubtedly included under the heading *Administration*, although some financial matters and perhaps some personnel matters are included in *General Office Work* (preparing reports, bookkeeping, and statistics) and *Miscellaneous* (staff meetings and informal conferences).

If one accepts the assumption that time classified as *Administration* includes much work on personnel, finance, and board matters, this analysis corresponds closely with the libraries visited in the present study.

This is about as far as one can go, however, in drawing a general pattern and even for these prominent activities, there are wide variations. About the only activities in which there are not such wide variations are *Assisting Readers* (Range 0 to 6.1%) and *Auxiliary Agencies* (.05 to 6.2%). Since the latter classification is subdivided further among *Transporting Assistants*, *Travel to and from Assignments*, *Branch Deliveries*, and *Assembling Material*, it is obvious that this does not give a true picture of the time the chief executive spends on problems of extension service.

One other point is significant regarding the activities of librarians. While there are wide variations, one cannot but be amazed at the amount of detail which goes over the average librarian's desk. In this respect, the libraries visited in this study present a situation similar to that found in the Chicago Public Library survey:

The chief officers of the library are definitely overburdened with a multiplicity of administrative details; yet not enough real administrative work is done.⁸

It should not be assumed that librarians who spend a major part of their time on finance, personnel, and relations with the board have freed themselves from administrative details and

⁸C. B. Joeckel and L. Carnovsky, *A metropolitan library in action*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 148.

routine. In one library, for example, with a budget of over \$200,000, a great deal of the time of the librarian during the fall months was spent in adding up the amount of money for bills which had not yet been paid, in order to find out how much money was available in the various expenditure classifications. This actual performance of the routine details means that the librarian had that much less time to give to the overall problem of financial management, as outlined in Chapter VII. There are a great many similar instances where the librarian performs duties which should be turned over to assistants in order to increase the librarian's time for broader problems of planning and supervision.

RECOMMENDATION.—It would not be desirable to insist upon uniformity in the duties performed by chief librarians. Even in a single library, the duties of the librarian may be quite different from those of his predecessor. The job will be determined largely by the person filling it.

At the same time, there are certain responsibilities which the chief executive of any library must face. Relations with the library board are important. The chief executive is the only person qualified to make certain decisions regarding finance and personnel, and he must understand these subjects. The same thing is true, to a certain extent, with regard to public relations, for even if the librarian selects capable assistants to manage a publicity program, it must be remembered that for many communities the librarian, more than anyone else, represents the library. With regard to book selection, there are widely different opinions. While the librarian may not need to be an outstanding subject specialist in his own right, he should be a person with wide understanding and appreciation of printed materials and their contribution to American life. If the primary job of the library is the dissemination and interpretation of printed material, its chief executive should certainly be recognized as a leader in this field.

Librarians should free themselves from the performance of many routine details which could be performed just as well by assistants. In many instances, this is the result of habit, or lack of confidence in assistants. But many burdensome matters could be taken off the librarian's shoulders if a sincere attempt were made to do so.

WHAT AUTHORITY DOES THE LIBRARIAN DELEGATE?

Except in the very small organization, it is undesirable for any one person to shoulder all of the responsibility for making decisions. The assistant librarian, department heads, and senior assistants, must be assigned certain responsibilities. In turn they must also have delegated to them the necessary authority in order that they can exercise some discretion as matters arise. The following paragraphs represent an attempt to estimate the extent to which librarians have delegated authority to their department heads.

In twenty-five libraries, where it was possible to form a sound judgment, eleven librarians delegated considerable authority, ten librarians delegated some authority, and four librarians delegated very little authority.

The situation may be described in slightly different terms. About half of the librarians delegated as much authority as they could—the primary responsibility for selection of personnel, recommendations for purchases, establishment of departmental policies, and all the minor details of departmental routine. Slightly less than half the librarians delegated to their department heads full responsibility for minor departmental matters and routines, but told their department heads how much money they should spend, assigned staff members to them with little consultation, and, in many cases, established major policies for the department without their advice. In four libraries, every matter which had not been long settled and standardized was decided by the librarian, with little assistance expected from anyone.

A few examples may be revealing. In one library, the librarian must approve: (1) all books ordered, and (2) all personnel matters except the details of schedules. The desk of another librarian is commonly regarded as a bottle neck due to the many minute details such as book orders and minor purchases which must have his approval. Another librarian personally checks and approves all subject headings, all classification numbers, and all preliminary catalog card drafts before they are sent to the typists.

On the other hand, several librarians have made a conscientious attempt to delegate responsibility to their staff. One librarian makes it a practice never to say *do this* or *do that*. Instead, he usually asks his staff members what should be done, and encourages them in the future to make their own decisions. Another librarian is attempting to develop an organization in which administrative authority and responsibility is diffused throughout the system. A third librarian is always free for consultation, but instructs his staff to come to him only when conflicts arise or major policies are involved.

Cases of the latter sort, however, occur chiefly in the larger libraries where no one person could make all the decisions. It is in the medium- and smaller-sized libraries that the librarian can, and all too frequently does, make most of the decisions for the library.

If any one fact has impressed the authors of this study, it has been the failure of librarians to delegate authority commensurate with responsibility to their department heads. There are too many cases where even minor details of departmental operation have to have the approval and close supervision of the chief. While the chief librarian must take final responsibility for most decisions on finance and personnel, it is significant to note that in a great many instances the librarian makes such decisions and then informs the department head, without previous consultation.

REASONS FOR FAILURE TO DELEGATE AUTHORITY.—Certain reasons have been advanced for not delegating more

authority. First, a common reason is, "With the present personnel it is impossible to delegate authority. They simply would not know how to use it and are not capable of assuming larger responsibilities." This is undoubtedly true in many instances. There are people who cannot exercise authority intelligently, and, unfortunately, such persons occupy responsible positions in some libraries. But usually, there has been no determined attempt to develop competent assistants. In such cases, the librarian cannot possibly know whether department heads would rise to the occasion. Some librarians, taking over new positions, have had considerable success in delegating responsibility to people who had no such responsibilities in the past. As one librarian put it, "The only way to develop responsible subordinates is to give them responsibility."

A second reason is the claim that the librarian knows more about a given department than does any other member of the staff. This is probably true where the librarian has gone from the department to his present job. There is always the danger, however, that before long the librarian will no longer be the best informed person. He will thus be in the position of making decisions in the light of circumstances which have radically changed. Hence, he must either neglect his broader duties to keep up with the work of the department or develop a capable executive and give him major authority in the field.

In small organizations, the librarian can be close to actual operations. It is easier to supervise book selection, for example, in the library which buys only a few hundred titles a year than in the library adding thousands of titles annually. With a staff of twenty to twenty-five employees, the librarian can be much closer to personnel problems than where the staff numbers a hundred or more.

A third reason is the fact that authority for certain matters cannot be delegated. The department head, however, may be given major responsibility for making the decision, even if the librarian signs the order. Librarian-board relations furnish

the precedent here. If the board had to study carefully every item which it must approve, it would have to put in a great many hours a week.

RESULTS OF THE FAILURE TO DELEGATE AUTHORITY.—Perhaps the most important result of the failure to delegate authority is the effect upon the persons concerned, that is, the department heads. Where all major matters are decided by the librarian, department heads are to a large extent reduced to the position of routine clerks. If no initiative is expected, none will be developed, and the primary emphasis of the department head becomes one of maintaining the *status quo* rather than analyzing new conditions and the work of the department in relation to such conditions. What should be the best sources of progressive ideas are dried up under such conditions.

A second result is the loss to the library, and incidentally the library profession, of persons who, under more desirable conditions, could develop into capable executives. The recent example of one large public library which filled its two most important administrative positions with persons from its own staff is certainly the exception. While there are sometimes good reasons for bringing in a new person for an important position, it is done all too frequently because of necessity. There is something decidedly wrong with a library system numbering hundreds of employees which does not develop several persons who at least could be carefully considered for the more responsible positions. Great benefits to the library itself are lost, not to mention those to the profession as a whole.

A third result is the piling of unnecessary details upon the librarian's shoulders. The chief librarian's job is big enough without adding to it the running of various library departments. The librarians who cannot delegate to department heads find themselves encumbered with so many details that they do not have the proper amount of time to give to their

larger responsibilities. Hence, their activities, too, emphasize maintaining the *status quo* rather than thinking, planning, studying, and evaluating. The librarian must be freed from consideration of minor details if he is to give proper care and thought to community relations, and to broad problems of planning and coordinating library service.

And finally, where the librarian insists upon making all of the library's decisions, the entire staff soon understands this condition and tends to settle down into the routine performance of individual duties. Thus, the persons best qualified to make suggestions for the improvement of library service soon lose all incentive to do so. In such cases, any improvement is an extremely difficult matter.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—Librarians should delegate authority commensurate with responsibility to their assistants and department heads. This means that assistants must be encouraged to stand on their own feet in making decisions affecting other people in their areas of responsibility.

Authority should be delegated to department heads for the following:

1. Full authority for routine details and decisions in the department; the librarian to be consulted only when his advice is needed.
2. Major responsibility for recommending policies primarily concerning the department, but which affect other library units and, hence, must be reviewed by the librarian.
3. Advice and suggestions for any library policy which may affect the given department.
4. Within certain policy limits as settled by the librarian, to plan and revise the budget of the department, including salaries, books, equipment, and miscellaneous.
5. Major responsibility for the selection of personnel for the department, especially in compiling specifications, and in making the final choice from qualified candidates.
6. Full responsibility for schedules, transfers, and similar personnel matters within the department.
7. Full responsibility for the selection of items to be purchased, including books, except for unusually expensive items, where the librarian's right of review should be exercised.

Large libraries afford abundant proof that authority for these matters can be delegated. There it is imperative for the librarian to leave such matters to the department heads.

ASSISTANT AND ASSOCIATE LIBRARIANS

Second in command in the library organization is frequently an assistant or associate librarian. While "assistant librarian" is the most frequent title, this study revealed eight first assistants, four associate librarians, two vice librarians, and one deputy librarian, a supervising assistant, and a superintendent of staff. Slightly more than half of the libraries (123 of 244) have assistant librarians.

Three types of assistant librarians are found:

1. The assistant librarian, whose major responsibility is the management of one department. Such persons are frequently designated because of seniority, and usually have general or over-all duties only in the absence of the librarian.
2. The special assistant librarian, who deals primarily with some general area of management such as personnel or finance. Such a person would have almost no concern with book selection, for example.
3. The general-manager type of assistant librarian, whose duties embrace all the library's activities.

No one of these types is sharply distinguished from the others. A department head assistant librarian, for example, may have certain over-all management duties, such as schedules. And frequently the general-manager type emphasizes some one aspect of library work as, for example, finance or purchasing.

Fifty-one libraries have assistant librarians whose duties are either special or general. Where chief duties were specified, personnel easily led the list, with twelve examples. Other major duties specified included finances, order work, purchases, records, work with the public (circulation, reference, and extension), and publicity. From the forty-two libraries visited, it was possible to identify eleven which have a true general-manager assistant librarian.

Additional information regarding the activities of assistant

librarians was available from the records of the Committee for the Study of Cost Accounting in Public Libraries. Table 5 shows the distribution of time spent on various activities by twenty-three assistant librarians.

TABLE 5
TIME SPENT ON VARIOUS ACTIVITIES BY TWENTY-THREE
ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS

Kind of Work	Median per cent	Range per cent
Circulation work	13.4	0.0 to 51.8
Acquisition of material	8.8	.02 to 41.0
General office work	8.6	.34 to 47.4
Administration	8.3	0.0 to 40.3
Reference work	5.5	0.0 to 54.9
Miscellaneous	5.2	.44 to 29.9
Unproductive time	4.3	0.0 to 22.2
Public relations	3.4	0.0 to 20.1
Care of building and collections	2.7	.05 to 37.9
Assisting readers	1.8	0.0 to 19.9
Unclassified or special . . . . .	.12	0.0 to 5.9
Cataloging, classifying, etc. . . . .	.08	0.0 to 47.3
Auxiliary agencies . . . . .	.05	0.0 to 5.9

It is interesting to note from Table 5 that circulation and reference work are relatively high among the duties reported. Also high on the list are administration and office work, which probably include personnel and financial activities and acquisition of material. The low ranking of cataloging and classification may be attributed to the fact that unless the assistant librarian is also head of the catalog department, he probably has little to do with cataloging activities. Even if the assistant librarian is not head of reference or circulation, he probably has some concern with these activities. As is the case with chief librarians, however, the activities of assistant librarians vary widely from one library to another.

Personnel and finance are more frequently the concern of the assistant librarian than are any other activities. This does not mean that the librarian shirks his responsibilities for these

functions. These are fields in which he is in greatest need of assistance, and a great many of the minor details of day-to-day management can be entrusted to an assistant librarian. The librarian, however, usually retains final control.

One rarely finds a business manager designated as assistant librarian, the choice usually going to one with a professional background. This has both its advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantages center chiefly around expecting a professional person to handle such matters as personnel and finance, without special training or experience in these fields. The advantages, however, are obvious, and clearly outweigh the disadvantages. If the assistant librarian is to exercise any over-all direction of library matters, he must be a person who knows library problems intimately.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF HAVING AN ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN.—The advantages of an assistant librarian are: first, an assistant librarian makes it possible to take some of the burden of detail off the librarian's shoulders, and second, it is possible to divide duties between two persons according to their abilities and capacities.

If the librarian has all the time he needs for such matters as relations with the board and the community and for the study and planning of improved library service, then an assistant librarian is probably not needed. But almost every librarian can testify to the neglect of certain important duties merely because of the pressure of internal management problems. The burden of the latter can never be entirely avoided, but it can be greatly minimized if a capable and efficient assistant librarian is developed.

But perhaps an even greater advantage is that an assistant makes possible a sounder division of duties. Many librarians are leaders but not managers. They have the ability to plan, inspire, and stimulate, but are not very efficient in getting things done. Whatever the respective abilities, it is safe to say

that one person is likely to have certain qualifications that another person will not have. The outstanding qualities of both can thus be used to best advantage, if a careful division of duties is made.

The chief arguments advanced against having an assistant librarian are: (1) He may make the chief less accessible to the staff. (2) He tends to become the heir-apparent to the librarian's position. (3) Money is not available to pay the salary needed.

The first argument as phrased in one library is: "I don't want anyone to come between me and my department heads." This is a real problem. If an assistant librarian would make the chief inaccessible to his staff, more harm than good would be done. But if the assistant could relieve the librarian of making minor decisions affecting the department heads, the chief might have more time to consult with them about their important needs. A good assistant librarian should handle many questions without their coming to the librarian at all. However, there should be no interruption of the flow of discussion and consultation. Careful study could establish the types of matters that should be taken to the assistant librarian, and not every matter would have to go through him just because the position exists.

One may well question whether the assistant librarian must be regarded as the heir-apparent to the librarian's job. Certainly, he should be considered when a new librarian must be appointed. At the same time, there is no reason to regard the selection as entirely closed. If the assistant librarian has been appointed with the idea that eventually he will succeed the present librarian, well and good; the assistant librarianship should be valuable training for the higher position. But there may be quite different qualities needed in the two positions, and the subordinate officer may not have the broader qualities necessary for the chief executive's position. Many librarians can cite unfortunate examples where an assistant librarian,

lacking the broad qualities of vision, imagination, and leadership, has been made librarian.

The argument of cost can only be answered by citing cases where assistant librarians are serving effectively. Few such librarians would want to dispense with the position. For the library which does not have such a position in its budget, it may be difficult to see where the money could be found. But as is the case with all positions or all services of the library, if they are worth the cost, the money should be found, even at the expense of other positions or services.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE RELATION BETWEEN THE ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN AND THE CHIEF?—First, there should be complete understanding between the assistant librarian and the librarian. This works both ways. The assistant librarian must be kept informed of all policy decisions by the librarian, and the assistant librarian must inform the chief regarding any decisions which he makes that either interpret or modify principles already established. Where the assistant librarian does not know what he can decide or how to decide it, he will be of little value. Similarly, no efficient organization can function where the chief does not know what the assistant has done or is likely to do under certain conditions. This presupposes that both parties have agreed as to their respective fields of decision.

Second, the assistant librarian should relieve the chief of many details. Minor decisions can be made, assistants can be heard, applicants and salesmen can be weeded out, but the assistant librarian must be willing to make decisions and assume full responsibility for them. He will not serve best if he simply refers all matters on to the chief.

Third, the assistant librarian should serve as the liaison officer between the staff and the chief. He should interpret policies and principles to the staff, particularly where decisions in individual cases are required. At the same time, he should

represent the viewpoint of the staff to the chief. Where general policies or principles are brought into question, there should be no attempt to interrupt the flow between the chief and the staff, and where the matter is important enough to warrant it, the assistant should simplify the problem of getting the chief's attention. But, the assistant librarian may be able to discuss some problems with staff members more frankly than the chief executive could.

Finally, the assistant librarian must owe complete loyalty to the chief. He should be vigorous and straight-forward in presenting his side of a case, or the staff's side, but once a decision has been reached, he must accept it without hesitation. The assistant librarian should be the library's most constructive critic when problems and policies are being decided, but once they are decided, it is his duty to accept them without question. He must never reflect upon the wisdom of such decisions or question them in such a way as to undermine the authority and importance of the librarian.

On the face of it, this looks like a large order for the assistant librarian, but the relationship can exist, because it does exist in certain libraries today; and where this is true, one usually finds a live, progressive organization, functioning with a maximum of efficiency and a minimum of friction.

RECOMMENDATION.—I. Every library should have an assistant librarian. For the library with less than twenty on its staff, this may be merely the designation of some department head to act in the absence of the librarian and perhaps exercise some minor jurisdiction over personnel and finance. But, once the size of the staff reaches twenty or more, an assistant librarian can contribute greatly to improved management, by handling much of the operation of the library, and preparing information for decision by the librarian.

2. Libraries should make the assistant librarian a true *general manager*. This type has been most successful in a

number of libraries and can be highly recommended for most libraries.

3. Except in libraries with less than twenty on the staff, the assistant librarian should not be head of a department in addition. The job of assistant librarian is a full-time one, and if departmental duties are continued they may encroach upon or crowd out the broader activities. There is also the danger that a specific decision may be unduly influenced by the needs of the assistant's department. Any position involving the supervision of several units should be free from any prejudice for the work of a given department.

4. The *special* assistant librarian may be recommended for libraries where there are good local reasons for not appointing a *general manager*. Such a person can assume major responsibility for certain areas of work such as personnel, finance, or purchasing. A definite contribution can thus be made to the management of the library; at the same time, the chief's energies are released for other matters.

EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

An increasingly important management device is the use of executive or administrative assistants. In theory, at least, such assistants are responsible for studying and recommending, the chief executive then making the decision and seeing that it is carried out. Thus, the primary purpose of such a position is to aid the executive, not to take over his responsibilities, although in libraries this exact relationship is not always found in practice.

Returns were available from 244 libraries in answer to the request "Please list any executive or administrative assistants responsible directly to the librarian, other than stenographic help, and give briefly their duties." Table 6 presents a summary of this information.

Two conclusions seem justified from the evidence in Table 6. First, administrative assistants are not found, as yet,

TABLE 6
ADMINISTRATIVE OR EXECUTIVE ASSISTANTS IN
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Size of Library Staff	Number of Libraries Without Assistants	Number of Libraries With Assistants	Per Cent of Libraries With Assistants
Group I less than 10.....	46	0	....
Group II—10-24.....	78	11	12%
Group III—25-74.....	55	16	23%
Group IV—75-149.....	9	3	25%
Group V—150-299.....	7	7	50%
Group VI—300 and over.....	4	8	67%
	199	45	18%

in a majority of the libraries. Of the 244 libraries reporting, only eighteen per cent reported one or more such assistants.⁹ Second, executive or administrative assistants are more commonly found in large libraries than in smaller ones. Fifty-seven per cent of the libraries with staff of 150 and over report executive assistants, while only eight per cent of the libraries with staff of less than twenty-five report such assistants.

Table 7 gives a summary of duties reported for executive or administrative assistants in libraries where such assistants are found.

Finance and personnel activities are easily the most frequent. Librarians seem to feel the need for an executive assistant more in business matters than in other phases of library work. Interesting also is the almost complete absence of administrative assistants concerned with adult education, research, planning and study, and public relations as distinguished from publicity.

⁹Thirty additional libraries report librarian's secretaries with administrative duties. It is sometimes difficult to draw a clear distinction between an administrative assistant and a secretary.

TABLE 7
DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE OR ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS*

Duties	Libraries With Staff of Less Than 25 Members	Libraries With Staff of 25 to 149 Members	Libraries With Staff of 150 Members or Over
Finance and purchases.....	5	14	4
Personnel.....	1	3	11
Publicity.....	1	..	..
Schedules.....	..	2	..
General.....	1	1	3
Buildings and grounds.....	2	..	..
Adult education.....	..	..	1
Special.....	1	..	3
Total.....	11	20	22

*Several libraries have more than one assistant, hence, fifty-three positions are represented here as compared with forty-five libraries which have administrative assistants.

ADVANTAGES OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS.—There are four advantages of administrative assistants. First, while they cannot relieve the librarian of the necessity of making decisions, they can relieve him of a great deal of routine work by getting all the evidence together. They can keep such records as will enable the librarian to have the necessary information from which to make his decision.

Second, the administrative assistant offers an excellent device to get business or personnel experience and training into the library. Librarians can profit greatly from experience in business management or personnel management, and yet it is often difficult to find a professionally educated person who has this type of experience. Also, there are complications in the way of giving to professional staff members training or experience in business and personnel management. An administrative assistant position can be used for getting an experienced accountant or personnel assistant without placing such a person in authority over department heads. Any authority would be exercised by the librarian on the basis of information supplied.

Third, the administrative assistant may help present an over-all approach toward general library problems. If such a person is responsible directly to the librarian, and not under any existing department, his study and recommendations can be directed toward the welfare of the library as a whole. Furthermore, his position, in close relation to the chief executive, enables the latter to keep close track of matters which, without an assistant, would involve too much detailed work. The librarian himself can thus take a more informed look at library problems.

And, finally, a position as administrative assistant is an excellent training ground for executive responsibility, giving one a chance to study administrative problems and the way in which they are handled. Such experience should be valuable in developing capable executives or department heads and should result in improved management. In one library, it is almost a yearly occurrence for the executive assistant to be given the headship of a department, or a position of importance in another library.

LIMITATIONS OF ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS.—Certain difficulties or dangers connected with the use of administrative assistants may be labelled limitations. First, is the danger that the assistant may gradually assume unintended authority over various matters. In the libraries visited, a few instances were found where the librarian's secretary was deciding some questions without the librarian's knowledge. This should be carefully guarded against unless the assistant is intended to have executive responsibilities.

A second limitation arises where the librarian neglects his true responsibilities because of the presence of an administrative assistant. Such a person cannot relieve the chief of the necessity of thinking and planning and should not be expected to do so. Neither should the librarian's decisions become automatic—they should be easier, but they must still be made with great care.

A third limitation results when the administrative assistant tends to be narrowly concerned with one or two activities. It is only natural to want such an assistant to take over certain duties after he has studied the problem carefully and has become the library's best informed person. But, as such duties are increased, the assistant's time and energies are no longer available for study and reporting of other matters. This tendency can be guarded against but is an easy error to fall into.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Administrative assistants may have general areas of specialization, such as personnel or finance, but they should not be given many regular duties. On the contrary, the major share of their time should be available to the chief for planning and study.

2. Certain library activities should be strengthened through the use of administrative assistants. More use might well be made of such assistants for public relations and adult education. These two are areas where a great deal of the spade work can be done by an assistant, even if final responsibility must rest with the chief.

3. All libraries, except those with staffs of less than twenty-five, should appoint an assistant for the purpose of study and research. In the large libraries, a department of research may be needed with several assistants,¹⁰ while in some libraries such duties may be part-time. However, every library should make provision for continuing self-study and appraisal. To say that such functions will be carried out by existing staff members means that the research duties are likely to be lost in the pressure of day-to-day problems.

¹⁰See, for example, L. Carnovsky and others, *An appraisal of the Cleveland Public Library*, evaluations and recommendations. (Chicago, 1939), p. 5, and C. B. Joeckel and L. Carnovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

CHAPTER V

DEPARTMENTATION IN THE LARGE LIBRARY

WHENEVER TWO OR MORE PERSONS are engaged in an enterprise, it becomes necessary to define their relationship. As additional persons join the enterprise, it becomes more necessary to assign definite duties and see that each person understands them thoroughly. In a small organization, everyone may have to do a little bit of everything; in a larger organization, one person may do most but not all of a certain thing; and, finally, in the largest, several people do different parts of a given task. The problem of departmentation is thus a problem greatly affected by the factor of size. Departmental organization must differ greatly between the Chicago Public Library with 1,017 employees and Moline Public Library with twelve. Hence, some grouping of libraries by size is necessary. This chapter discusses departmental organization in the thirty-eight larger libraries (staff of seventy-five and over); Chapter VI will discuss medium-sized libraries (staff of ten to seventy-four).

Any discussion of library organization must be based on some grouping of library activities. The basic library activities are:

1. Direct service to the public, the loan of materials, or the furnishing of information and advice.
2. Selection, acquisition, and preparation of materials for use.
3. Management of funds and personnel, care of buildings, and promotion of public relations.¹

In the literature of administration, activities in the first group have been termed *line* services, services which deal with the public and are directly engaged in carrying out the library's

¹See K. D. Metcalf, "Departmental organization in libraries," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues in library administration*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939).

objectives. Activities in groups two and three are commonly termed *institutional*, *auxiliary*, or *processing* services. Though not constituting direct performance of the library's objectives, they are nonetheless essential to its administration. Without them no *line* department could function properly. Because of the special problems of acquisition and preparation in libraries, the term *processing services* is used to distinguish them from the auxiliary services common to any organization (finance, building maintenance, public relations, etc.).

By far the greatest variations in the organization of public libraries are found in the line services for adults. One could, with justification, base a classification of types of library organization on the grouping of adult services. Hence, the present chapter discusses separately, organization for adult services, children's work, and extension. Following these *line* services is the discussion of processing and the other auxiliary services.

ORGANIZATION FOR ADULT SERVICE

The "functional" type of departmentation.—The basis for departmentation in the majority of large public libraries is what has been called *functional* organization. Chart 1, an organization chart for the St. Louis Public Library, illustrates this type.

The characteristic feature of the *functional* type of organization is a major division between reference and circulation, with a large share of the services for adults being handled by these two departments. Thirty-one of the thirty-eight libraries belong to this group. Not included are the six subject department libraries, and the Newark Public Library, where all reference work, except in the fields of art, education, and business is handled in the general lending department.² In several other libraries, reference work in one or more special fields is handled by a special subject department.

²C. Van Dyne, "The organization and work of the lending department, the Newark Public Library," *Library Quarterly*, XI (January, 1941), pp. 69-84.

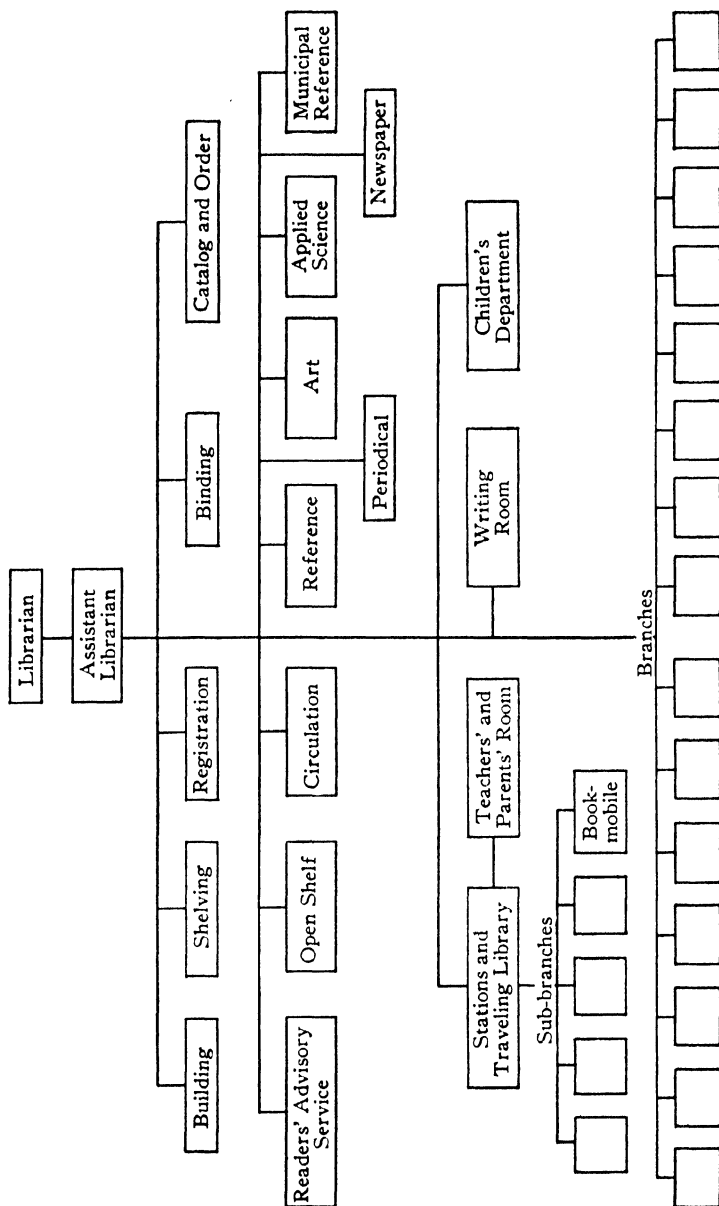


CHART I. ORGANIZATION CHART FOR THE ST. LOUIS PUBLIC LIBRARY
(Functional Type of Organization)

Several other features are common to the *functional* type of organization. One usually finds a rather large number of departments, many of which have grown up as new and specialized services, have been added. Again, the departments found are usually built around some one or more specific activities with well-defined limits.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE "FUNCTIONAL" ORGANIZATION.—The *functional* type of organization has certain advantages. The first is the fact that its departments are based upon definite library activities, and the limits of each are often very clearly drawn.

Second, the *functional* organization grows with the library. New departments may be added as new services are needed. It is likewise true that services no longer needed may be discontinued easily, although there is little evidence that much of this has been done.

Third, the *functional* organization makes it possible to give several people positions of more or less importance. A large number of department heads can be created, even if their jurisdiction is rather limited.

There are several disadvantages of the *functional* type of organization. First, the creation of a large number of departments tends to make the problem of supervision difficult. In many such libraries, the librarian has a very large span of control, with entirely too many units reporting directly to him.

Second, the *functional* type of organization tends to promote *isolationism* of adult services. Small departments frequently become wrapped up in their own peculiar problems and lose sight of the library's common goals. Usually the librarian, or assistant librarian, has the task of promoting unity, with all too little time to effect it efficiently.

Third, and the most important disadvantage of the *functional* organization is the fact that it sets up an artificial distinction between reference and circulation which is foreign to the library's ultimate purposes—the dissemination of ideas and

the promotion of education. There should be no barrier between ideas which must be studied in the library building and ideas which may be studied outside. This works both ways. The path should be smooth for the borrower who wants to go from a specific item or fact to a book to read on a given subject. Also, the general reader who has read on a given topic should find it easy to gather specialized reference information on that topic. Every librarian knows that, though a patron's request may seem a reference question at first glance, it may turn out to be a request to borrow a book, or, where an individual seems to want a book to borrow, he may in reality want a specific item of information. This is not at all a new idea; as Mr. Dana expressed it:

It is more agreeable for the visitor to find that the first person to whom he makes known his wants can proceed at once to help him, and need not pass him on to another *titled* person. . . . All assistants are reference librarians, when they answer a special query; yet all remain assistants eager to go and come and to do this or that for the next visitor.³

In the large public library today the trend is away from sharp divisions between reference and circulation. Almost every librarian interviewed had plans to establish new subject divisions including both circulation and reference work. But in no case was there any feeling that established subject divisions should be discontinued and their functions divided between reference and circulation departments. At the same time, there seems to be universal recognition of the need for a general reference department to house general encyclopedias, quick reference books, perhaps the bound periodicals and periodical indexes, and certain other materials which the library does not circulate. The emphasis, however, is toward an information service rather than detailed research in special subject fields. This is not at all surprising, if one reflects on the difficulties facing the reference assistant who must attempt to know all subject fields thoroughly.

³John Cotton Dana, *A library primer*, (Boston: Library Bureau, 1920), pp. 62-63.

RECOMMENDATION.—The division between circulation, on the one hand, and reference, on the other, is not the most fruitful basis for organizing service to adults. A more desirable division would be between information service, on the one hand, and reference and advisory services, on the other. This is the trend exhibited by the subject-division libraries and other libraries where there has been an attempt to break down the artificial barriers between reference and circulation work. Though not specifically described as an organization device, the division between information and advisory services was suggested by Mr. Learned in his *The American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge*.⁴

THE SUBJECT TYPE OF DEPARTMENTATION.—Under the subject department type of organization all adult services are grouped into a number of departments, each limited to a specific subject or group of subjects. These subject departments usually combine in one unit reference material, circulating material, periodical and pamphlet material, indeed, all of the library's resources on the given subject. If there is a reference department, its functions are very general, resembling more an information service.

Six public libraries are now completely divided into subject departments: Cleveland, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Rochester, Toledo, and Worcester. It is not surprising to note that Worcester has the smallest number of departments and, hence, the broadest grouping of subjects, as it is the smallest library in point of size of staff. Table 8 presents the grouping of subjects found in five libraries. Worcester library is not included, as it has the four broad divisional groupings of popular, humanities, social sciences, and business, science, and technology. (See p. 118 for a chart of the Worcester organization.)

Table 8 shows the similar grouping of subjects in these five libraries. While Rochester separates biography from history

⁴(New York: Harcourt, 1924), pp. 12ff.

TABLE 8
GROUPING OF SUBJECTS IN THE SUBJECT-DEPARTMENT LIBRARIES

Subject Departments	Cleveland	Los Angeles	Baltimore	Rochester	Toledo
Literature and language.....	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fine arts and music.....	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓*
Technology and science.....	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Business and economics.....	✓	..	✓	✓	✓
Civics and sociology.....	✓	✓	✓	✓	..
Municipal reference.....	✓	✓
Biography, travel, and history.....	✓	✓	✓	..	✓
Biography.....	✓	..
History and travel.....	✓	..
Local history or special.....	✓	✓	..
Foreign.....	✓	✓
Popular.....	✓	..	✓	✓	✓
Fiction.....	..	✓
Education, philosophy, and religion.....	✓	✓	..
Philosophy and religion.....	✓	✓
Teachers (education and children).....	..	✓

*In Toledo, the humanities are included with fine arts and music.

and travel, Los Angeles and Cleveland do not include education with philosophy and religion, and there are some other minor modifications, the groupings in the main show little variation.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF SUBJECT DEPARTMENTS.—Miss Warren's article, "Departmental organization of a public library by subject,"⁵ discusses the pros and cons of subject departmentation in libraries. Her discussion need not be repeated, but it may be well to summarize the arguments therein presented.

The arguments in favor of subject departments hinge around five major points:

- I. The reader is better served by having together all the books on a subject, whether such books are for reference or circulation.

⁵C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues*, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-34.

2. The librarian in charge can become an expert in the subject field, and the user has the advantage of this specialization.
3. They provide a better means for promoting contacts with community groups in the related subject fields.
4. Subject departments tend to break down the artificial barriers that are sometimes erected between reference questions and circulation or advisory service to the reader.
5. Better citizen interest and enthusiasm is obtained for the library as a whole, as well as for the subject department.

The disadvantages of the subject plan as quoted from Miss Warren's article are:

1. It is an expensive method of administration, both in staff and book stock.
2. Materials wanted together by one specialist may be widely separated, owing to the exigencies of any classification plan.
3. There is a danger of over-specialization on the part of the staff, so that an assistant in one department will be entirely ignorant of related materials classified elsewhere.
4. There is real difficulty in building up a large staff with the reference sense and skill in using bibliographic equipment.
5. There is danger that department collections in the hands of an intemperate chief will develop along some line of personal enthusiasm, without due regard for minor and parallel interests.
6. A few department heads, well-paid, have a better chance of becoming a cabinet of constructive and inspiring executives than a larger number.

In most of the subject libraries, all of the five advantages have been achieved to some degree. They are not theoretical advantages; they are advantages that have been actually realized.

While at least one library reports an example or two of each of the disadvantages, the argument of cost is the only one which is universally admitted. This argument may, therefore, be examined a little more in detail.

The three factors which make costs greater in the subject-department library seem to be:

1. Need for duplicating certain books in borderline classes,
2. Need for specially-educated staff members, and
3. Need for maintaining persons on duty at all departments for all hours the library is open.

The total cost of duplicating certain books in two or more departments has not been very great according to the testimony of some librarians. Certainly, it alone would not be of importance enough to offset the advantages to be gained. As to the higher-priced staff members needed, most reference or circulation departments attempt to develop subject specialists among their staffs, even where there are no subject departments. Under such a policy, and the trend in librarianship is in this direction; the division into reference and circulation will be just as expensive in the matter of salaries as will subject departments.

The third argument that more staff members are needed is important. As long as subject departments are open, they must be staffed, and, as yet, there has been no experience with staffing them from a central desk during less busy hours. Several librarians have argued that the expense item here would not be great if fewer subject departments were employed.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN SUBJECT DEPARTMENTATION.—Certain other difficulties have been found through conversations with librarians about the problem. First, there has been a tendency in some subject departments to develop rather extensive indexing projects. These may take a disproportionate share of the subject librarian's time.

Second, users of subject departments want to find everything they need there, whether it falls within the subject classification or not. The business man, for example, wants to find all of his material in the business department, even though the library's classification places some of it in sociology or civics. Thus, the subject department tends for many purposes to become a type of reader department, and the subject classification basis upon which it was originally based is not entirely adequate.

Third, the classification of books for subject departments may not be best for branches. Perhaps the branch reader wants

to select a good biography, and is a little irked to find biographies of musicians, scientists, and business men, separated in different parts of the classification. Such instances are not frequent, and are not of tremendous importance.

Fourth, it is sometimes claimed that the subject department plan does not meet the needs of the general reader. Such a person often wants a wide variety of books on all subjects from which to select, and does not want to have to go to several different departments merely to find a good book to read. Los Angeles is the only one of the subject department libraries which has not recognized this by the establishment of a popular library; although its fiction department answers the problem in part. In general, the opinion in the subject department libraries has been that the popular collection adequately answers this need.

Fifth, the building arrangement seems in some cases to be an insuperable obstacle. The number of rooms available and the necessary location of reading rooms away from the central stack, point to the fact that the subject-department library requires a building which is specifically built for the purpose, or can be adapted. In this connection, it is interesting to note that seven large library buildings were erected within the past fifteen years, and five were specifically planned for subject departments. Brooklyn's new building was completed recently, although some work had been done many years ago. Although not foreseen in the original plans, it is hoped eventually to have at least five major subject units. This will leave Philadelphia as the only one of this group which has not gone over to the subject arrangement.

Finally, the patron who knows his subject well frequently expects too much of the assistant in the subject department. He expects the librarian to be as intimately acquainted with all phases of his own limited hobby as he himself is. In rare cases, the patron has found material of which the assistant did not know. This is but another way of re-emphasizing the old li-

brary maxim, "Demands should not be encouraged unless the library is fully qualified to meet them adequately."

The above are simply conditions favorable and unfavorable to the subject arrangement as they have been found in practice. Almost without exception, the unfavorable conditions represent difficulties and dangers rather than inherent disadvantages.

PARTIAL DEPARTMENTATION BY SUBJECT.—Thirty-one of the remaining thirty-two large libraries have one or more subject departments. But differences occur both in the number of units as well as in their level in the hierarchy. In Los Angeles, the subject departments are at the top level. In the Brooklyn Public Library, however, they are divisions within a circulation department.

The classification of libraries on the basis of their division into subject units reveals three groups. In the first group are eight libraries where the major division is between a reference and a circulation department. Any subject units are then subdivisions under one of these two. In a second group of twenty-three libraries, there are both reference and circulation departments with subject departments in addition. In these cases, subject departments are on the same level as the reference department. That is to say, they report directly to the next superior officer whether librarian of a main library or assistant librarian.⁶ Finally there are the six *subject department libraries* previously discussed: Baltimore, Rochester, Worcester, Toledo, Los Angeles, and Cleveland. Of this group, only Los Angeles and Worcester have dispensed with the reference department; in the others, the reference department's service is general and excludes work within the subject fields.

In most of the libraries where there is the major division between circulation and reference, such subject departments

⁶In Newark there is a lending department which combines the service of reference and circulation for most subject fields, but Newark has, in addition, three subject departments (including the business branch).

as exist are under the reference department. In one other library where there are independent subject departments, there are, in addition, two subject divisions under the reference department. Thus, where subject units exist in these libraries, the circulation department either takes over the residue or is largely a lending agency.

Table 9 gives a summary of the number of subject units in large public libraries.

TABLE 9
NUMBER OF SUBJECT UNITS IN LARGE PUBLIC LIBRARIES*

Number of Subject Units	Number of Libraries
None.....	1
One.....	9
Two.....	5
Three.....	6
Four.....	3
Five.....	3
Six.....	2
Seven.....	1
Eight.....	..
Nine.....	1
Ten.....	1
Total.....	32

*The six libraries completely departmentalized by subject are not included.

The range is from libraries with one subject unit or less (these are the smaller libraries) to Detroit Public Library, with nine subject departments, and the New York Reference Department, with ten. Detroit lacks only departments for literature, philosophy, religion, biography, travel, and history to become completely departmentalized by subject.

Table 10 shows the frequency of various subject units as found in the large public libraries.

While the terminology, as well as the material included, varies from library to library there is, in the main, considerable uniformity. Technology and science, art, and music departments lead the list.

TABLE 10
TYPES OF SUBJECT UNITS FOUND IN LARGE PUBLIC LIBRARIES*

Subject Units	Number of Libraries
Science, industry, and technology (combined with art in one of these instances).....	22
Art.....	19
Music (combined with art in four of these cases).....	15
Business department or branch.....	9
Local history.....	9
Education or teachers.....	6
Municipal reference.....	6
Social sciences.....	6
Fiction, popular, or open shelf.....	5
Medical.....	4
Foreign.....	3
Law.....	2
General history.....	1
Philosophy, art, and religion.....	1

*Libraries completely departmentalized by subject are not included.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PARTIAL SUBJECT DEPARTMENTATION.—Partial subject departmentation has many advantages. It presents an excellent method of recognizing special community interests and making effective provision for them. Second, it presents an opportunity to develop subject specialization on the part of staff members, and relieves the general assistant from the necessity of being a jack-of-all-trades. Third, it is a good way to decentralize the book collection and make use of a building with several reading rooms. In fact, most of the advantages of complete subject departmentation apply (see p. 75).

There are certain disadvantages, however. First, there is the tendency to pull off all books in the subject field, and require the general reader to go to the subject department for some popular books and to the circulation department for others. If this is to be avoided, popular books, for example in the field of sociology, must be duplicated for the popular or open shelf library and for the sociology department.

Second, while expert service is provided the reader in the fields where there are special departments, the reader in other fields may not be cared for properly. In a sense, the library favoring one group of readers over another.

Third, if the library is not completely departmentalized by subject, various scraps of material closely related to the subject field may be left in the general circulation and reference departments. The organization of a fine arts department may leave in general circulation such subjects as sports and games and practical photography. Even though the circulation department can develop subject specialists in the field of history it would be difficult to serve the needs of special groups in any of the smaller fields.

Finally, where the library is not completely departmentalized by subject, the use of the building presents certain obstacles. Adequate storage space is rarely available in the subject department. Hence, a backlog of materials in the subject fields must be kept in the circulation department or general stacks. This may involve a great deal of confusion and duplication.

DEPARTMENTATION BY AREAS OF MAJOR INTEREST.—Plans for a new central building, Washington has developed a variation of the subject department plan which should prove very interesting. For the first building unit, it is proposed to create (1) the department of general reference and advisory service, with divisions of popular library, reference information, home interests, and current affairs; (2) the department of public service and local history, including divisions of public administration, municipal reference, Washingtoniana, and occupations. It should be noted that this organization will provide special emphasis upon particular interest areas, such as the home and occupations, rather than a division of subject materials into a logical scheme according to the library's classification. This represents a new approach, and one which

likely to be extremely fruitful. The experiment will be watched with great interest.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. The subject department organization is of present types the most satisfactory for large public libraries. Where building arrangements permit, most libraries could profitably adopt this type.

2. Partial subject departmentation offers many advantages to large libraries which cannot effect complete subject departmentation.

3. Libraries should experiment with new types of subject departmentation, perhaps based upon major areas of community interest and activity rather than the library's classification scheme.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DIRECTION OF ADULT SERVICES.—In the great majority of public libraries, the chief librarian (or the assistant librarian) is the only person to give over-all direction to the library's services to adults. In nearly all of these cases, the chief has so many other duties that he does not have the time for careful supervision and coordination of adult services. Service to adults has lacked the unified direction that is found so often in organization for children's work.

Three methods have been used in public libraries where there has been some attempt to meet this problem through organization. In the District of Columbia Public Library there is a Coordinator of Adult Service. This position is essentially a *staff* or advisory and coordinating function. It is described further in Chapter IX.

The second is the appointment of a responsible officer with direct authority. In Pittsburgh, the head of the adult lending department is in charge of adult work in the branches as well as at the main library. However, he does not supervise the reference departments. In Providence, an assistant librarian is in charge of adult service in all of the main library departments as well as in the branches. These are the only two ex-

amples of an over-all head of adult service comparable to the head of children's work.

The third method is the appointment of a librarian of the main, or central, library. As illustrated in the Cleveland Public Library, the organization would be as shown in Chart 2.

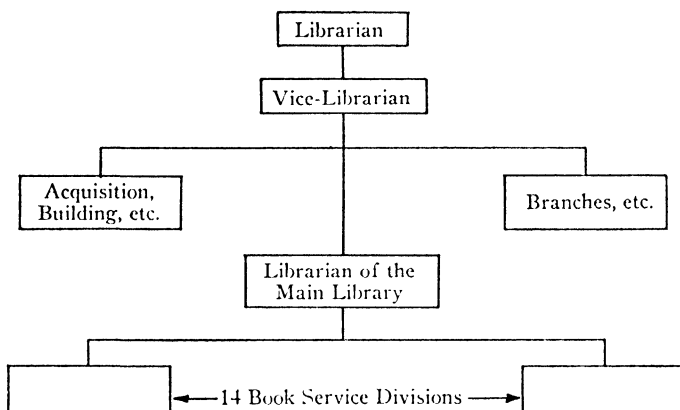


CHART 2. ORGANIZATION WITH A LIBRARIAN OF THE MAIN LIBRARY

The librarian of the main library usually does not have authority over the adult services in branches, but his influence may be significant in the coordinating of all services to adults.

The position of librarian of the main library has many advantages. First, the officer can be particularly watchful of those areas where departments overlap, or where a special subject of wide interest is more or less forced into a larger grouping. Second, he can study and plan for all service routines that concern adults. Third, such a position is an excellent one to direct the training and transfer of staff. In short, it emphasizes the fact that adult service is one service, subdivided for greater efficiency but with many interrelations.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—Libraries should place definite responsibility for adult service. Desirable methods of unifying adult services are:

1. Establishment of a coordinating position.
2. Appointment of a librarian of the main library.
3. Appointment of a Director of Work with Adults, comparable to many such positions for work with children.

Briefly stated, the major needs in organization for adult services are the need for (1) equalization of service facilities and materials, (2) adequate provision for certain types of adult groups, (3) better relations among the various units serving adults, and (4) more careful study of the library's service to the entire adult population as contrasted with study of its services to special groups. These objectives could be achieved by careful supervision on the part of the chief librarian. But the delegation of responsibility to some responsible officer would probably facilitate their achievement.

READERS' ADVISORY SERVICE.—Twenty-two libraries report readers' advisers as a more or less distinct unit in the library organization. In five of these libraries, the readers' adviser is under the circulation department. In addition to advisory assistants, Washington, D.C., has a Consultant in Adult Education, whose job is principally to work with various community groups interested in adult education and the use of library material.

In some libraries, the position of readers' adviser is in the nature of a planning and correlating position for the entire library system. This is certainly true in the New York Public Library, where the readers' adviser has been responsible for aiding in the establishment of advisory services in the branches. But, in most of the libraries visited, this is not a major part of his duties. His functions are principally to advise with individual readers in need of specialized guidance, and perhaps to prepare definite reading courses.

Whether or not they have a *Readers' Adviser*, some libraries have come to realize that true readers' advisory work means a redirection and re-emphasis of the library's services and is a concern of the entire organization rather than of one person or one department. If this point of view is carried out,

it probably makes little difference whether or not there is a readers' adviser.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK.—Only eight of the thirty-eight large libraries studied have special units for service to young people.⁷ In several other libraries, of which Los Angeles is an example, certain assistants in the various departments are designated as responsible for work with young people. The eight libraries with special units and special collections all testify to their value, but in such cases only a small collection, and not all the books which young people will need, is provided. Partly for this reason, every one of the young people's units is either a separate department or a division of an adult department, and not part of the children's department.

DEPARTMENTATION BY TYPE OF MATERIAL.—Another method of departmentalizing library services to the public is according to the type of material handled, such as periodicals, documents, and pictures. Table 11 gives the number of such departments found in the large libraries studied.

TABLE 11
DEPARTMENTS BASED ON TYPE OF MATERIAL HANDLED

Name of Department	Number of Libraries
Periodical.....	24
Newspaper.....	11
Documents.....	7
Pictures.....	6
Map.....	5
Pamphlets.....	3
Manuscripts.....	3
Periodicals and documents.....	1

⁷A recent study reports that of thirty-eight libraries, in cities ranging from 7,000 population and up, seventeen call their service to young people "a department, five say that theirs is a division, and sixteen do not give it any definite status." Sister Marie Inez Johnson, *The development of separate service for young people in public libraries in the United States*. (Baltimore, Enoch Pratt Free Library, 1941), (Mimeographed), p. 10.

Periodicals divisions or departments head the list, and are found in twenty-four of the libraries. Eleven libraries have a separate newspaper department or division. In several cases, periodicals and newspapers are combined within one unit, and in one case, periodicals and documents.

Type of material departments vary widely in the activities which they include. At one extreme, for example, is the periodical department which is merely a display and reading room. At the other extreme lies the periodical department which, in addition, orders, checks in, circulates, and even binds periodicals. In such cases these departments become in effect both *line* and *auxiliary* departments.

ORGANIZATION FOR CHILDREN'S WORK

All of the libraries in the large group have special units for children's work. The chief variations have developed around the problem of responsibility for children's work in branches.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN'S WORK IN BRANCHES.—The types of organization for children's work found among the libraries visited follow closely the classification of a recent study by Mary R. Lucas.⁸ The following discussion is taken in part from her study.

Under the first type of organization the head of the central children's department is purely advisory and has no authority over branch children's librarians. Of twenty-six libraries, for which information was available on this matter, only three libraries fell within this category.

The second or *cooperative* type has a head of children's work who is responsible to the librarian for planning children's work throughout the system, but who has no supervision or control over children's work in branches. New York is the only example of this type of organization.

The third or *supervisory* type includes eight libraries where

⁸M. R. Lucas, *The organization and administration of library service to children*. (Chicago: A.L.A., 1941).

the central children's head has direct authority over branch children's assistants in some matters, e.g., book selection, story telling, reading projects—but the assistant is directly responsible to the branch librarian for all other matters.

In the fourth or *control* type, the head of children's work is directly responsible for all children's work throughout the system, and has direct authority over children's workers in the branches. In the twelve libraries which fall within this group, the children's assistants in branches are, for all practical purposes, a part of the staff of the central children's department rather than a part of the staff of the branch library.

Although not mentioned in Miss Lucas's study, there appears to be a fifth or *divided* type of organization which is closely related to the advisory or cooperative type. In two of the libraries visited, there are two heads of children's work, one for the main children's room, and one under the branch department. In both cases, the relations between the two heads are close.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.—Miss Lucas's book presents the advantages of these types of organization, and her discussion need not be repeated. A few general comments are in order, however.

In most of the cases where the central children's department has direct authority over branch children's work, such authority is exercised only after consultation with the branch librarian or with the head of the branch department. Thus, when the head of children's work is giving orders to the children's assistant in a branch, such orders have often been discussed with the branch librarian and approved before being issued.

Few instances were found where there had been confusion or friction in children's service, and such examples were confined largely to the past. One is tempted to say that it makes little difference what the relation is, except for past confusion and the possibility of its recurrence. Superior people can work effectively together under almost any sort of relation. They

can work together better, however, under a well-defined allocation of authority and responsibility.

CONDITIONS NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION OF CHILDREN'S WORK.—Three important conditions must be met before any organization for children's work can be effective: (1) There must be a workable division of authority; (2) This division must be clearly understood by all concerned; (3) There must be mutual confidence and a sincere attempt to make the arrangement work.

The first condition can be accomplished best when the children's assistants are either full-time or have certain designated hours to serve as children's librarian. If, as is the case in many small branches, the children's librarian must take her turn at the adult desk, she can for all practical purposes be regarded as two part-time persons. If her duties are mixed, and her responsibility to two or more superiors confused, the chances of trouble are increased.

In the great majority of libraries visited, there seems to be a clear understanding of the division of authority in matters of children's service by all concerned, frequently in spite of the absence of a written statement. Such a statement, however, if available to all concerned, would prevent misunderstanding, especially in the case of new assistants.

The third condition, sympathy and cooperation among the persons involved, will vary, of course, with the local situation and staff. Careful direction by the librarian is essential, in addition to careful selection of people for the various positions. And the fact that, in the libraries studied, friction is definitely the exception indicates that harmony is not a difficult condition to achieve.

One final point, an established principle of administration is *unity of management*. In the words of Mr. Reeves, this principle "requires that no member of the personnel of the institution receive orders from more than one person for the performance of any particular function."⁹ There is no violation

⁹F. W. Reeves, in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

of principle if the assistant in the branch can be designated as performing functions in children's work in one case, and functions in general branch service in the other.

RECOMMENDATION.—In large libraries one person should have direct authority over all children's work. Under such a *supervisory* type of organization: (1) A unified and coordinated program of children's work can be directed for the system as a whole; (2) Authority is exercised by those most capable of understanding the specialized problems involved.

ORGANIZATION FOR EXTENSION SERVICES

Every one of the large libraries maintains some form of extension services. These services vary in number and in quality, as one would expect, but certain problems of organization are of common interest. These are: (1) centralization *vs.* decentralization of all extension work; (2) organization for supervision of branch libraries. Each of these will be discussed briefly.

CENTRALIZATION VS. DECENTRALIZATION OF EXTENSION WORK.—Table 12 gives the number of departments dealing with extension work. It will be noted that nineteen libraries have one department in which is centered all extension (ex-

TABLE 12
NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS EXCLUDING BRANCHES
DEALING WITH EXTENSION

Number of Extension Departments	Number of Libraries Where Branches Are Individually Respon- sible to Librarian	Number of Libraries Where Branches Are Under a Branch or Extension De- partment
One.....	9	10
Two.....	3	10
Three.....	1	3
Four.....	..	2

cluding individual branches), while thirteen, in addition, have only two extension departments. If departments for work with schools are excluded, only eleven libraries have more than one extension department.

There seem to be two general practices regarding organization for extension services. In the one case, all extension services are centralized (except for children's and schools). In the other, branch administration is separated from the administration of stations, traveling libraries, and book deposits. The arguments for the former are obvious. The arguments for the latter are based largely upon the fact that agencies other than branches involve chiefly transportation of books and staff, and are more effectively managed by a separate agency.

Library experience seems to favor centralization. Personnel, building arrangement, and other factors occasionally prevent, but in the majority of cases, all extension units could be effectively combined. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that recent recommendations for the Cleveland and Chicago libraries called for centralization of all extension.¹⁰ And Cleveland and Chicago have extension services among the largest to be found.

RECOMMENDATION.—All extension services should be centralized in one department in libraries of this size group.

ORGANIZATION FOR SUPERVISION OF BRANCHES.—In twelve of the libraries, there is no branch department or supervisor. Nineteen libraries have a branch department, and in five additional cases, an assistant librarian has been placed in charge of branches and extension. In Pittsburgh and Providence, extension services are divided between children's work and adult work.

The libraries without branch departments range from Dayton, with five branches, to Brooklyn, with thirty-five. Some of

¹⁰C. B. Joeckel and L. Carnovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-58, L. Carnovsky and others, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

these librarians reported that they did not want a branch supervisor. In one instance, the librarian supervised directly sixteen branches, and reported that he did not want a branch supervisor or anyone else to interrupt the direct relation between himself and his branch librarians. In a few other libraries, the same opinion was expressed but in no case was the number of branches supervised as large as sixteen. Most other libraries, however, have no such position because of financial reasons.

It is difficult to determine how many branches a librarian or a branch department head can supervise effectively. Where the problems of each agency are similar, one person can supervise a relatively large number with little difficulty. To a certain extent, this is true for branches—building problems, personnel matters, circulation and registration procedures, are the same for many agencies, and this simplifies the problem of the supervisor. If there are main library departments which supervise or advise on particular branch matters, the problem is further simplified. The central children's department, the reference department, the order and catalog departments further reduce the number of matters which the supervisor must handle. Under these conditions, a branch supervisor can manage more agencies than would appear possible if only the numbers are considered. It should not be impossible for one person to supervise thirty branches, provided this is his only task.

However, it is difficult to see how the librarian, with all his other duties, can effectively supervise more than six branches. While one can heartily approve the sentiment that the librarian should remain close to his branch heads, he can well delegate to a branch department certain details of administration and supervision that would give him more time for considering broad problems and policies. Details of branch schedules, cleaning, building maintenance, care, and similar problems, should not require the librarian's time. In fact, the librarian's

time, if released from such duties, might well be spent on more important issues confronting the branch librarian. In this matter the experience of the majority seems to be the sound principle to follow.

RECOMMENDATION.—Where there are more than six branches, there should be an extension department with a person in charge to whom all branch librarians are responsible.

OTHER METHODS OF BRANCH SUPERVISION.—The larger libraries face difficult problems in supervising many branches scattered over a wide geographic area. Three methods have been employed to simplify the problem of the branch supervisor in such cases.

First is the regional branch plan as found in the Chicago Public Library. All branches and extension service units in a given area are responsible to the librarian of a regional branch. This reduces the number of units dealing directly with the main library, and coordinates activities within a broad geographic area (Chart 3).

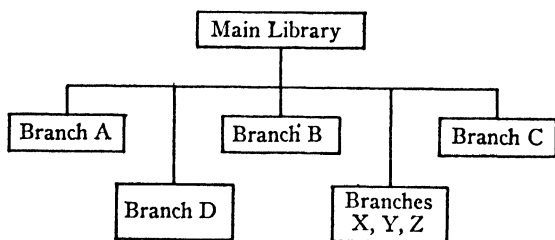


CHART 3. ORGANIZATION FOR BRANCH SUPERVISION
WITHOUT REGIONAL BRANCHES

With regional branches (Chart 4) there is a reduction in the total number of branches reporting directly to a librarian or head of a department. In addition, coordination of effort and activities for a given area is possible. On the other hand, best results would probably be found in cities where there are

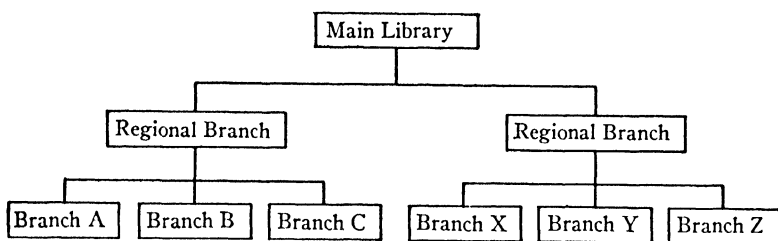


CHART 4. ORGANIZATION FOR BRANCH SUPERVISION
BY MEANS OF REGIONAL BRANCHES

somewhat homogeneous geographic and social communities. Such communities probably exist to a greater degree in Chicago than in other cities. It is interesting to note that the Joeckel-Carnovsky study recommended the continuance and strengthening of the plan.¹¹ In addition, the Cleveland Appraisal Study suggested *Regional Branches* for Cleveland.¹²

The chief advantages of the regional branch plan are two-fold: (1) It is a good way of reducing the span of control for the branch supervisor by reducing greatly the number of people reporting directly to him. (2) The regional branch makes it easier to train new people on the job.

The chief disadvantages of the regional plan are: (1) It adds an additional level in the administrative hierarchy, interposing a regional branch head between the supervisor and the branch librarian. (2) Service areas and administrative areas do not always coincide. (3) People qualified to serve as regional librarian are not easy to find.

A second method of simplifying the problem of branch supervision is by the use of the main library's experts to co-ordinate certain areas of branch service. In New York, there is a Supervisor of Branches and, in addition, Superintendents of Children's Work, Storytelling and Reading Clubs, Inter-

¹¹C. B. Joeckel and L. Carnovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-58.

¹²L. Carnovsky and others, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

branch loan, Work with Schools (including general oversight of reference work), Registration, Binding, Book Ordering, Cataloging, and A Reader's Advisor. Chart 5 illustrates, in a general way, the flow of authority and advisory services.

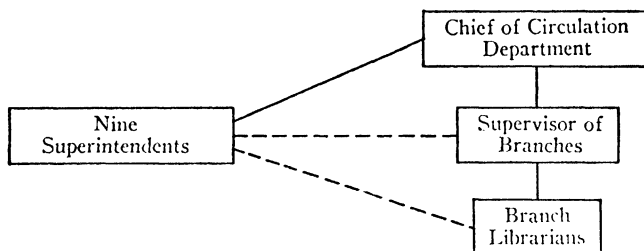


CHART 5. ORGANIZATION FOR COORDINATION OF BRANCH SERVICES
IN THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

The principle illustrated in this organization is direct relation from chief to branch librarian with advisory superintendents for special phases of the work.

This type of organization has certain advantages: (1) It reduces the areas over which the branch supervisor must exercise direct supervision; (2) it provides for the best experts in the system to aid in the branch program; (3) it serves to promote closer relations between branch and main library services. This latter point was encountered frequently among the libraries visited. The comment was often heard that "our branch librarians need to make greater use of our specialists, in reference, readers' advisory work, technology, etc."

In the third method of organization to simplify branch supervision, specialists in such fields as children's work and reference are attached to the branch department. This is the type of organization favored in a recent study.¹³ It has much the same advantages as the New York system; however, it

¹³Lowell Martin, *The purpose and administrative organization of branch systems in large urban libraries*. Typewritten M.A. paper (Chicago: Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, 1940).

does not serve to bring the branches and the main library closer, except as there is close cooperation between the branch experts and those at main.

RECOMMENDATION.—Coordination of branch services should be the responsibility of the persons best qualified in the fields represented. For most libraries, this means the head of the main library department.

ORGANIZATION FOR PROCESSING SERVICES

There is, perhaps, more uniformity in the organization for processing services than in any other phase of the library's activities. This is illustrated in Table 13, which gives the number and types of processing departments found in thirty-eight large public libraries.

TABLE 13
PROCESSING DEPARTMENTS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Name of Department	Number of Libraries
Catalog.....	34*
Order.....	32†
Binding‡.....	31
Catalog and order department.....	4
Catalog, order, and binding.....	1
Stacks.....	8
Publications.....	8
Print Shop.....	3
Periodical, order, and preparation.....	1
Mending.....	1

*Boston Public Library has catalog departments in both the Reference Division and the Circulation Division.

†N.Y.P.L. Circulation Department has a Superintendent of Book Ordering, in addition to the Reference Department's Executive Assistant Supervising Preparations Division.

‡New York has binding units in both the Circulation and Reference Departments.

Cataloging is found as a department in all of the libraries, order (either as a department or combined) in all but one, and binding in all but seven. There seems to be no uniformity in the number and type of other processing departments.

In Oakland, there is a central library catalog department, and, in addition, a catalog department as a part of the branches department. While these two work closely together, they are separate and entirely independent. This is due, in part at least, to the fact that the branches department is located outside of the central library building. In Dayton, there is a juvenile catalog department responsible jointly to the catalog librarian and the librarian. These are the only two instances in which there are two or more distinct cataloging units, even though a great many of the catalog departments have specialists for branch books or children's books and occasionally for other departments.

COMBINATION OF CATALOGING AND ORDER.—Four libraries have combined cataloging and order into one department, and one library has combined cataloging, order, and binding. Many other libraries, however, are interested in the problem. For a more complete treatment, the reader is referred to Mr. Metcalf's article.¹⁴ The St. Louis library found that the combination of cataloging and order work has enabled a better routing and assigning of cataloging, and has resulted in greater economy and faster work, a coordination of the records kept, and a sharper division between clerical and professional duties. The chief difficulties to the combination, as Mr. Metcalf points out, are unsuitability of the building and physical arrangement, and the problem of finding a person qualified to handle both responsibilities.

In view of the number of libraries which have been considering the possibility of combining order and catalog units, it is surprising that only five examples in the larger libraries are found. And while it is extremely hazardous to attempt a judgment on the basis of five cases, there seem to be few ob-

¹⁴C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues*, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

stacles. The combination should be made, not merely to reduce by one the number of departments, but with a real view to co-ordination and the elimination of duplication. If the problem is approached from this angle, it seems likely that more libraries might try such a plan with good results.

ONE PROCESSING DEPARTMENT.—Worcester is the only large library which has followed the example of the Library of Congress and combined all processing activities into one department.¹⁵ Boston's Division of Business Operations is somewhat similar, but there are certain differences. The Boston division is chiefly for the business activities discussed below, although it does include book purchasing. However, each of the other two Boston divisions (circulation and reference) have units for book selection and for cataloging. Hence, Boston does not furnish a true example.

The problem is very similar to that of combining cataloging and order work, as these are by far the major processing activities. Hence, the discussion of that topic is pertinent to this point. Suffice it to say that several libraries are interested in the possibility of such a combination, and some future study may have more experience upon which to base a judgment.

RECOMMENDATION.—Libraries should give careful consideration to combining cataloging and order work into one department and to the combination of all processing activities into one department.

OTHER AUXILIARY SERVICES

Most important among the library's other auxiliary activities are building maintenance, financial management, personnel management, purchasing, and public relations. No one of these

¹⁵L. Q. Mumford, "Account of the reorganization of the processing department at the Library of Congress," *A.L.A. Cat. and Class. Yrbk.*, 10:45-56, 1941.

is peculiar to library organization, if one excludes the purchase of books, periodicals, and newspapers. Financial and personnel management are discussed in Chapters VII and VIII.

TABLE 14
ORGANIZATION FOR BUILDING MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

Type of Department	Number of Libraries
Building maintenance, accounting and purchasing of supplies under one head	5
Building maintenance and supplies under one head	2
Separate building department	20
Various building employees responsible directly to librarian..	8

BUILDING MAINTENANCE.—Table 14 presents the various types of organization for building maintenance found in thirty-five large libraries.¹⁶ In all but eight cases, responsibility for building maintenance, repair, upkeep, and similar activities is placed in one department. The small number of cases in which building maintenance is combined with accounting and purchasing under one head is striking. In one additional case, the building superintendent purchases most of the library's supplies.

It is difficult to understand how any large library can operate without one responsible building superintendent. Even where there is no one responsible superintendent, it usually develops that the librarian deals chiefly with one person who then transmits directions to the other building employees. Where the financial obstacle seems formidable (paying a good salary for a good superintendent), it should be pointed out

¹⁶In Pittsburgh, finance, purchase of supplies, and building maintenance are handled by a general department for all of the Carnegie institutions. In Indianapolis and Kansas City, these functions are performed by employees directly under the school board.

that the saving in dollars and cents will soon more than justify the additional expense.

PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT.—Table 15 presents the various types of organization for purchasing in

TABLE 15
ORGANIZATION FOR PURCHASE OF SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

Type of Organization	Number of Libraries
Purchasing combined with building maintenance and accounting	5
Purchasing combined with accounting	15
Purchasing combined with building	1
Separate purchasing officer	7
Purchases made by Librarian's office	7

thirty-five large public libraries. There is wider variation in the organization for purchasing than in almost any other business activity. Furthermore, Table 15 does not give an entirely accurate picture of the situation, for even where there is a central purchasing office, a bindery department, for example, or a building manager, may have major responsibility for purchase of materials along special lines. Actually, in many cases, purchases are made by these different departments, even though they are routed through the central office.

Here again, the majority practice of libraries seems to be the sound one. One central office for the coordination of all purchases has many advantages. And it need not mean taking from the line officer the right to determine specifications as to quality and amount. Thus, if the building manager knows most about the type and quality of cleaning materials needed, he should have major responsibility for designating the amount and quality of such supplies. When this is done, a good purchasing agent may be better qualified to secure better prices, but he should not have authority to lower standards or

substitute inferior materials. The basis for exemption from central purchasing should be the commodity purchased and not the agency purchasing.

If this relationship is established and understood, a good purchasing agent may save money for the library. He should know the time to buy and the firms from which to buy; and even though each library department will feel that its supply needs are distinctly specialized, the purchasing agent may be able to pool these with excellent results. Merely the establishment and maintenance of friendly relations with library supply houses and local business firms will often result in direct financial savings for the library.

THE BUSINESS DEPARTMENT.—Can building maintenance, purchasing, and financial management be combined under one business manager or assistant librarian? The easy answer to this is yes, for it has been done successfully in five of the libraries studied. In every case, the arrangement has proved a good one and has released the time of the librarian for more important professional problems. In addition, the advantages of a central office and central direction are considerable. The business manager or head of such a division may quite properly be a specialist in one of the three fields, but, even so, he is quite likely to have a good understanding of the problems in the other two. All three activities are related and touch upon each other at many points, so that combining them may make for coordination and simplification.

BOSTON'S DIVISION OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS.—The grouping of auditor, book purchasing, stock purchasing, printing, shipping, binding, and building departments into one Division of Business Operations in Boston is significant. The experience there has shown that:

1. All the activities combined in the Division are closely enough related to be supervised and coordinated by one head.
2. Duplication of activities is greatly decreased.

3. Centralization of activities has many advantages.
4. The *bibliothecal* staff is relieved of details about which they know relatively little and care less.

So far, no inherent weaknesses in this organization for auxiliary services have been discovered. There have been minor stresses and strains, but these are nothing more than would be expected, especially when something new is being tried.

PUBLIC RELATIONS.—To describe the organization for public relations in libraries would be an impossible task if one uses the inclusive sense of the term. Public relations involves every contact which an organization makes with any part or individual of the public.¹⁷ Hence, every library assistant is a public relations assistant, and the only person who can direct the public relations program is the librarian.

Certain aspects of public relations, however, can be centered in one or more persons. These are commonly included under the term publicity in library literature, and include such organized publicity matters as newspaper stories, radio programs, bulletins, and exhibits. Table 16 presents the organization for publicity in large libraries. Twenty-one of the libraries have delegated some definite responsibility for pub-

TABLE 16
RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLICITY IN LARGE LIBRARIES

Types of Organization	Number of Libraries
One full-time person or more	14
Part-time assistant	5
Part-time responsibilities of some staff members	2
Staff committee	2
No department or assistant definitely responsible	6

¹⁷James L. McCamy, "Public relations in public administration," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues*, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

licity, though, in five instances, this is a part-time job. In two other cases, publicity is a part-time responsibility of an assistant librarian who serves chiefly to coordinate publicity matters. It is interesting to note that fourteen libraries have found a full-time publicity department or assistant desirable, even though there are many more people concerned with public relations.

No better way of suggesting a desirable organization for publicity could be found than to refer to Mr. Lowe's article, "Interpretation of the Public Library."¹⁸ Mr. Lowe's own organization in the Rochester Public Library is one of the best found. There, a full-time public relations director has major responsibility, both for suggesting publicity measures and for carrying them out, many staff members being drawn into the picture for activities best suited to their qualifications. In fact, every person in the organization is regarded as a public relations assistant. This is as it should be, for while staff committees and individual staff members can be of great service in publicity matters, a committee is not an adequate substitute for a single publicity director in the active management of publicity matters.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. All large libraries should have a building superintendent charged with the maintenance and upkeep of the library's property.

2. All purchasing, except books and related materials, should be centralized in one department, even though major responsibility for quantity and quality specifications may rest with various line officers.

3. Libraries should give careful consideration to the unification of all business operations into one business department.

4. Although responsibility for public relations must inevitably rest on the librarian, the large library should have a

¹⁸C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues*, *op. cit.*, especially pp. 329ff.

publicity assistant. Such an assistant should be full-time and should be very close to the chief executive, being in a sense regarded as the voice of the library.

PROBLEMS IN THE ORGANIZATION OF LARGE LIBRARIES

Departmentation for various library activities has now been discussed. This concluding section will endeavor to look at certain general characteristics of library organization.

THE SPAN OF CONTROL.—Too many individuals reporting to one executive officer is generally recognized as an undesirable condition.¹⁹ While no easy answer can be given to the question of how many individuals the chief or assistant librarian can supervise, the actual practice, as it exists in libraries today, can be summarized. This is done in Tables 17 and 18. Table 17 relates only to central departments, whereas Table 18 includes branches, as well.

TABLE 17
NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS IN LARGE PUBLIC LIBRARIES*

Number of Departments	Number of Libraries
Less than 10.....	9
10 to 14.....	12
15 to 19.....	11
20 to 24.....	4
25 to 29.....	2

*Branch librarians responsible directly to librarian or assistant librarian are not included.

Tables 17 and 18 indicate that twenty-nine of the large public libraries have ten or more individual departments, and if branches are included, the number is considerably higher.

¹⁹C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues*, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-11, 93-96.

TABLE 18

NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS AND BRANCHES RESPONSIBLE DIRECTLY TO
LIBRARIAN OR ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Number of Departments and Branches	Number of Libraries Without Assistant Librarians	Number of Libraries With an Assistant Librarian	Total Number of Libraries
5 to 14.....	10	2	12
15 to 24.....	10	4	14
25 to 34.....	5	1	6
35 to 44.....	..	1	1
45 to 54.....	2	2	4
55 to 64.....	..	1	2

The range is from Worcester, with five units responsible to the librarian, to Philadelphia, with sixty-four, including branches.

A great many librarians have recognized that they are directly supervising too many units, but some, with more than twenty, have expressed little concern over the matter. In one library, twelve departments may be too many for the librarian to supervise, while twenty in another library may not be an impossible job. The question can be answered once and for all only for the individual library.

Fifteen departments are more than can be supervised most efficiently by one person. And a number much more conducive to effective administration would be not more than ten.

Many types of groupings have been found which can be used to reduce the number of individual departments, and yet not make the service units too remote from the chief. Among these are librarian of the central library, head of branch and extension service, head of adult circulation or lending, head of processing services, and head of business activities. Libraries with more than ten departments should use these and other methods of reducing the librarian's span of control.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY COMMENSURATE WITH RESPONSIBILITY.—An important principle in any organization is the necessity of delegating authority commensurate with responsibility. No objective evidence can be presented on this point as it relates to libraries, but certain general observations may be made.

In the libraries where there have been broad groupings of departmental units, this principle seems to be more adequately carried out than in the libraries with a large number of small departments. The assistant librarian, the librarian of the central library, or the head of branches and extension, is normally given more complete authority than the head of a smaller department—that is to say, authority commensurate with responsibility is given more frequently where the responsibilities are large.

Librarians, generally, are much inclined to retain authority and not depend upon their department heads as much as they might. Too many times, the librarian looks upon the department head as a person to keep certain activities functioning smoothly rather than to exercise major responsibility for modifying and extending library service. Few librarians are inclined to interfere in the management of departments. But, in many cases, they expect their department heads to be nothing more than supervisors of detail operations. Effective organization demands leadership on the part of each operating head, and this type of leadership cannot be developed unless a definite effort is made to do so by the library's executive officers. More could be done along this line than has been done in the past.

THE GROUPING OF HOMOGENEOUS ACTIVITIES.—In the large public library, it is possible to provide specialized staff members for specialized jobs; hence, few instances are found of the grouping together of dissimilar activities. About the only instance of grouping of dissimilar activities is the desig-

nation of some department member as part-time publicity assistant, and obviously this is based upon the special qualifications of the person rather than upon a consideration of the type of activities involved.

Again, there seems to be rather complete separation of line, processing, and other auxiliary activities. This is one of the outstanding strengths of large library organization.

LINE OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY.—Little confusion exists in large libraries regarding lines of authority and responsibility. Departmental and divisional lines are fairly clear and involve little overlapping. Furthermore, they are normally based upon the practice of many years, and, hence, are well understood by all concerned. This is especially true in those libraries where written statements have been made and are easily available to staff members. Such statements do not guarantee clear understanding, but they help to promote it.

A few instances of confusion and friction were found, but in the main these were not serious. What is more serious seems to be the fact that in a few instances the confusion or friction was not recognized or known to the chief executive. No organization can function effectively where such situations occur, and a careful study may help to locate and remedy them. In general, however, the large library makes a good showing on this point.

ORGANIZATION AS A MEANS OF RELATING SIMILAR ACTIVITIES.—The history of library organization suggests that librarians have, in the main, thought of organization as a means of separating various activities. The number of departments and units gives tangible evidence of this. Furthermore, the history of a library's organization usually reveals more cases where new and separate departments have been created out of older ones than cases where activities have been grouped together into larger units. Happily, there is some evidence, at present, of a tendency to move in the other direction.

A point often overlooked by librarians is the fact that the framework of departmentation is an excellent means by which related activities can be placed in close juxtaposition. This may be done by physical proximity, by amalgamation under one responsible head, or by providing interdepartment and inter-agency coordinating devices (see Chap. IX). If viewed in the proper light, organization assumes its rightful place as a means of implementing the library's purposes and bringing related activities together.

ORGANIZATION AND MAJOR PURPOSES.—In an earlier article, the authors have questioned whether the library's major purposes are reflected in the framework of organization.²⁰ While there is no one generally accepted statement of library purposes, the following four objectives are commonly found in one form or another:

1. Recreational or general reading services.
2. Information and fact-finding services.
3. Education and advisory services.
4. Services to the scholar and research worker.

No large public library has based its organization mainly on these purposes, but each has received recognition in several instances. The tendency of the general reference department to become an information service in the subject department libraries is one example. Again, the popular library is an example of the recognition of the library's recreational purpose. The various subject units, together with readers' advisors and adult education departments are recognition in part of the library's services in advisory and educational activities. The subject departments, also, provide for service to the scholar, and in a number of large public libraries there are special research departments based upon special collections.

²⁰ "An approach to the problems of library organization," *Library Quarterly*, IX (April, 1939), pp. 133-44.

It may be questioned whether these major purposes can be made the primary basis for departmentation. It does appear, however, that they can be more adequately recognized in the library's organization than they have been in the past. Many of the trends in library organization point in this general direction.²¹

SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION FOR THE LARGE PUBLIC LIBRARY.—Chart 6 shows a suggested organization for the large public library. This chart is presented chiefly to suggest certain desirable organization features that have been found in several public libraries. All business activities are combined under one business manager or assistant librarian. All processing activities are combined under one head or an assistant librarian. Separate children's, and branch and extension departments are provided, as these seem to be almost universally accepted as desirable in libraries. It should be pointed out, however, that through the various positions of coordinator, a much closer relationship between branches and main library departments would be possible, children's assistants in the branches would be responsible to the children's department for children's work and to the branch librarian for general services.

The library adult services are organized around four major departments. The department of fact-finding and information would be responsible for general reference questions, telephone reference service, and would maintain an information desk to aid patrons entering the library for the first time. The library's central collection would be divided among subject divisions under the supervision of the department of education and advisory services. The number of divisions could be varied to meet local conditions. The department of recreational reading would have charge of a popular library and

²¹*Cf.* Lowell Martin's suggestion "for a three-way grouping of books in community branch libraries"—reading for information, for general enlightenment, and for recreation. *Op. cit.*, p. 64.

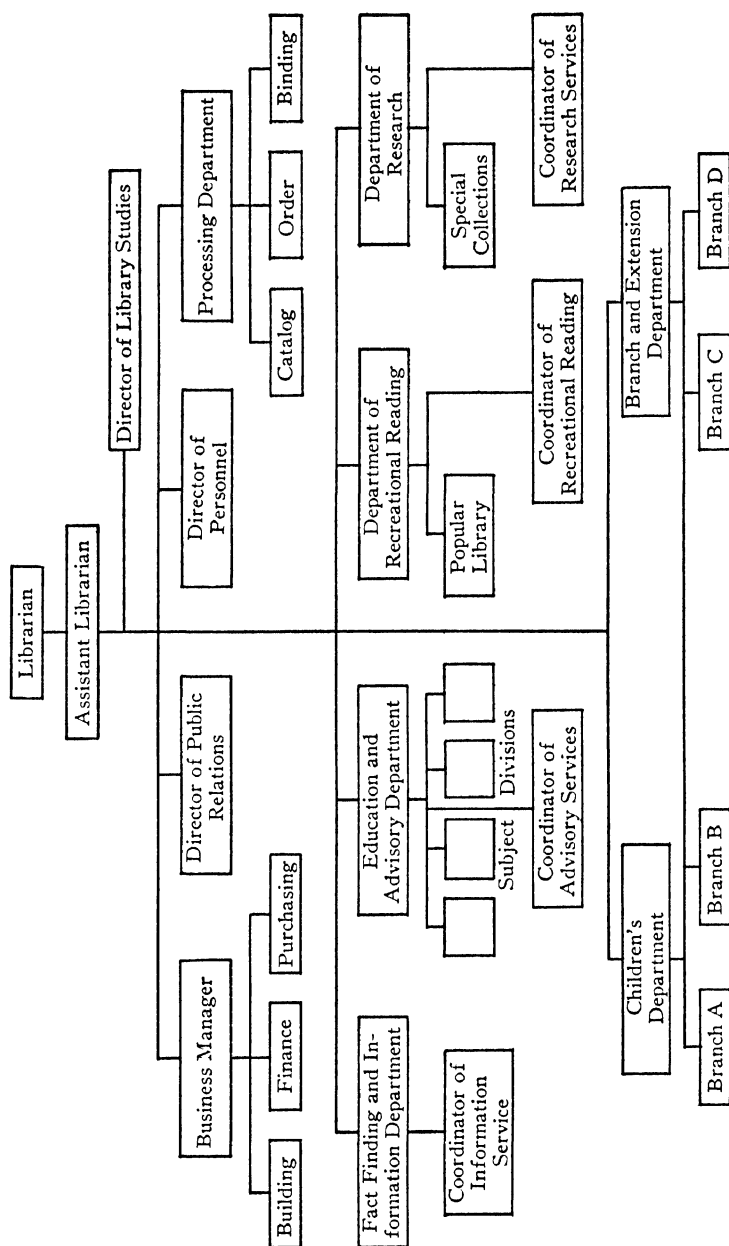


CHART 6. SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION FOR THE LARGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

would perhaps have major responsibility for lending details and registration. If needed, there might be a department of research to give specialized aid to the serious student or scholar in the subject fields and have general supervision of the library's special collections. Perhaps some public libraries could dispense with research departments and include such services in the education and advisory department.

Four coordinators for each of the adult service departments are recommended. These coordinators would serve to study, plan and recommend improvements in the library's activities. They should work closely together, and might constitute a small advisory cabinet. They should be responsible for stimulating closer relations between branches and the main library.

Three administrative assistants would be responsible directly to the assistant librarian and the librarian. One, the director of public relations, would have major responsibility for centralizing all publicity, and would aid the librarian and the department heads in promoting effective public relations in the entire organization. The director of personnel would be responsible for centralizing all personnel matters, aiding the librarian in establishing a sound personnel scheme, handling minor personnel difficulties and problems—in fact, dealing individually with many members of the staff. Finally, a director of library studies would be created, with no line or regular duties. He would work closely with the various coordinators and the librarian and assistant librarian, and would be available to make any needed investigations into the adequacies of library services, the functioning of the organization, and related matters. It should be clearly pointed out that the director of library studies should be given no regular or routine duties, but should be free at all times to undertake any investigation which either the department heads or the executive needed.

The probable advantages of such an organization have already been suggested.²² It is not at all new, for it is recognized in various parts by individual libraries studied. In an individual library, building conditions, finances, or even personnel may make parts of the scheme impractical, but it should be observed that many libraries could incorporate many individual features of this organization under present conditions.

²² "An approach . . .," *op. cit.*

CHAPTER VI

DEPARTMENTATION IN THE MEDIUM-SIZED LIBRARY

THE MEDIUM-SIZED LIBRARIES, as defined for the purposes of this study, are libraries with staffs of from ten to seventy-four members. In some of the larger libraries of this group, organization problems are comparable to those discussed in Chapter V, while in the smaller libraries, staffs of ten to twenty-four, problems are not so complex. In the latter, however, some specialization is necessary, and departments are set up, even though they may include only one staff member.

In libraries with less than ten on the staff, almost no departmentation is possible. True, there are specialties, but every staff member may, at one time or another, have to do a little bit of everything. Such libraries are so varied in their organization that generalization becomes impossible. Hence, they are omitted from the discussion of departmentation.

With respect to organization problems, the medium-sized libraries are an in-between group. Some have recently outgrown the small library class and are experiencing growing pains because of that fact. Others are rapidly approaching the complexity of organization to be found in the large public library. As Miss Warren points out:

Once, at a regional conference of five midwestern states, a round table was held on October 13, 1932, for medium-sized public libraries. . . . The arguments and conclusions sound exactly the same as when the libraries under consideration are great big parent bears or little ones.¹

Thus, the information in the present chapter should be supplemented with the data for large libraries (Chap. V).

¹Althea Warren, "Administration of the public library of medium size," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues in library administration*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 182.

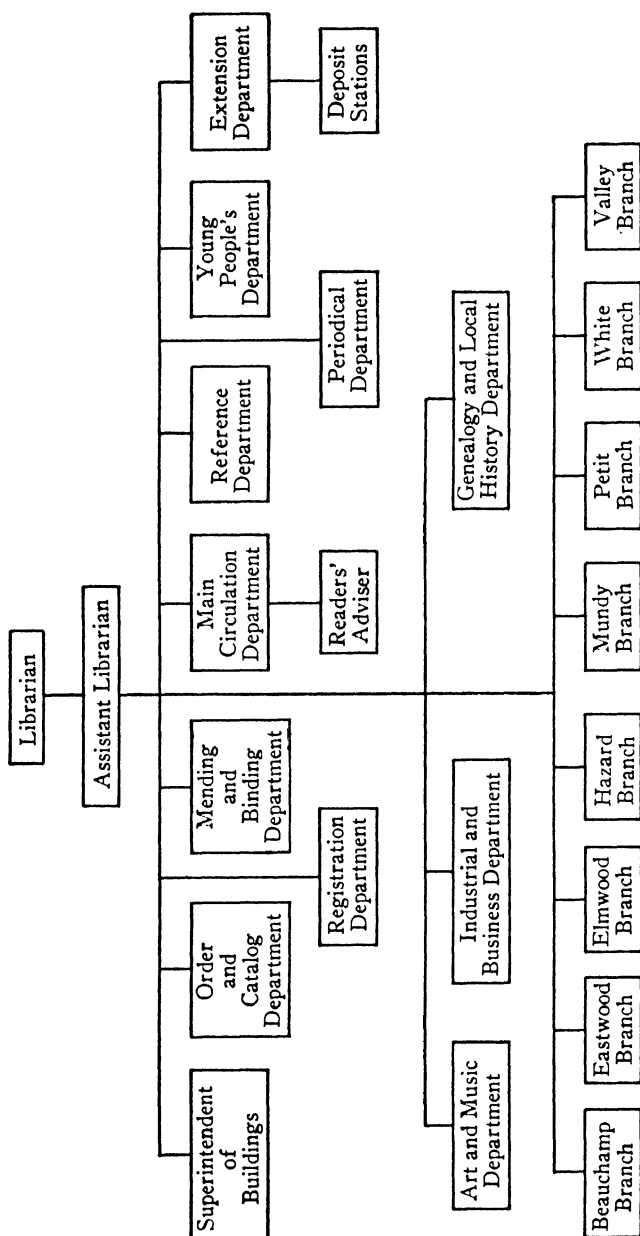


CHART 7. ORGANIZATION CHART FOR THE SYRACUSE, NEW YORK, PUBLIC LIBRARY
(Functional Type of Organization)

In discussing organization, the same outline will be followed as in Chapter V: (1) Service to adults, (2) Service to children, (3) Extension services, (4) Processing services, (5) Auxiliary operations.²

ORGANIZATION FOR SERVICE TO ADULTS

THE "FUNCTIONAL" TYPE.—In the *functional* type of organization the major departmentation of the library's service is between circulation and reference. Chart 7 shows such an organization as illustrated by a chart for the Syracuse, New York, Public Library. The prevalence of the *functional* type of organization is shown further in Table 19.

TABLE 19
ORGANIZATION FOR REFERENCE AND CIRCULATION

Type of Organization	Group II 89 Libraries with Staff 10-24	Group III 71 Libraries with Staff 25-74
Reference department.....	74	63
Reference division under adult department ..	..	3
Reference division under circulation department ..	..	1
Circulation and reference department.....	1	1
Circulation department.....	71	61
Circulation division under adult.....	..	2

Only a handful of libraries do not have this basic division, and even where an adult department includes circulation and reference work, there are usually distinct circulation and reference units. This is true, also, for some of the smaller libraries, where every staff member is responsible directly to the librarian. Even though there is no circulation department, there may be one or more assistants in circulation.

²See Chapter V, pp. 69-70, for explanation of these terms.

Isolationism among the library's adult services is not as acute a danger in the medium-sized library as it is in the large library. In the former, there is less dispersal of the book collection, and the assistant can have a much better knowledge of the total library resources than his colleague in the large library. Again, in the library with a smaller staff, interchange of assistants among departments, especially reference and circulation, is common.

The functional organization does, however, set up a somewhat artificial distinction between questions which are of a reference nature and those which involve advisory service or the lending of books. There should be every opportunity for the merging of both types, and an easy flow back and forth between reference and lending services provides best service to the public. Furthermore, the nature of reference work in the medium-sized libraries approaches more closely advisory service. The specialized student or research worker is not as much a problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Local factors such as size of staff and building arrangements make the functional type of organization simple and economical. The disadvantages of the functional organization for medium-sized libraries are not as serious as in the larger library.

2. Libraries should avoid the dangers resulting from an overly sharp division between reference and circulation. Both are essential library services, but they should be thought of as slightly different means of serving the public, between which there should be very close cooperation.

THE SUBJECT TYPE OF ORGANIZATION.—No medium-sized library was found where there has been complete departmentation of services to adults by subject departments. The smallest library with complete subject departmentation is the Worcester Public Library (staff is about 100). As pointed out in Chapter

V, the Worcester organization is based upon four large divisional areas (popular, humanities, social sciences, and business, science, and technology) rather than upon limited subject departments. Chart 8 shows the Worcester organization.

ADVANTAGES OF SUBJECT DEPARTMENTATION.—Although no library in this size group has planned complete subject departmentation, other libraries have given careful thought to the problem. Hence, some further discussion is in order.³

The medium-sized library cannot hope to establish as many as ten or twelve subject departments. This would be impossible, both from the standpoint of the building arrangement and the size of the staff. If subject departmentation is to be feasible, it must be by three or four major subject groupings. Add to these a popular library or open shelf collection, and it is at once apparent that the problem is a difficult one. Few medium-sized libraries could provide as many as four adult reading rooms, and three, including a popular library, is probably the maximum. Many libraries, however, could provide a popular library or open shelf collection near the main circulation desk, and, in addition, have two rooms for subject departments. Whether it would be possible to combine within one room such broad groupings as humanities and social sciences, or business, science, and technology, remains to be seen; but they are at least possibilities.

Size of staff in the medium-sized library is, perhaps, an even more difficult obstacle to subject departmentation. If even three subject units are established, they must be staffed by one or more persons at all important hours the library is open. If the library has a combined reference and circulation staff of as little as eight or ten persons, this obviously draws the line pretty close. The alternative to full-time staffing by subject specialists would be specialized staff on duty at the hours of greatest public demand, and service from a central desk for

³See also Chapter V.

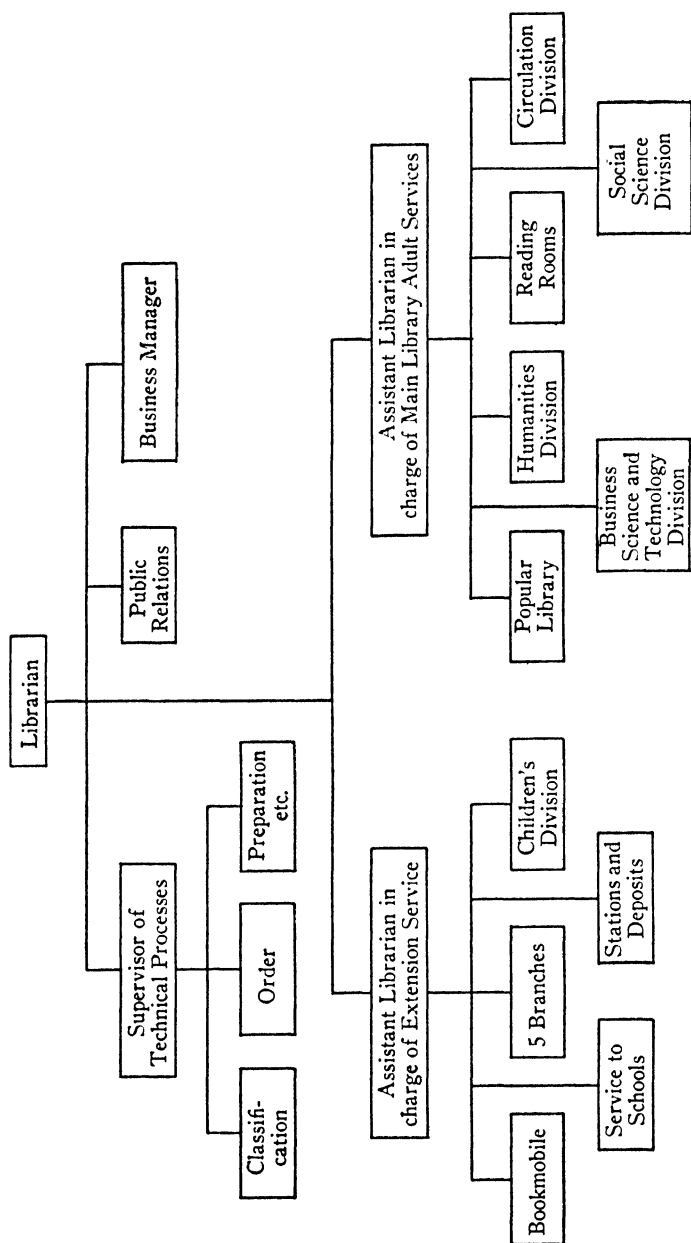


CHART 8. ORGANIZATION CHART FOR THE WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS, PUBLIC LIBRARY
(Subject Type of Organization)

the hours when library use is relatively quiet. This offers difficulties but they are not insuperable.

Another problem concerns staff specialization in such broad subject groupings as humanities, social sciences, and science. The experience of the University of Colorado is pertinent:

The service given by the four divisional librarians and the two special librarians is probably much better than that possible under the general reference-reserve room combination, for no one librarian can be expected to serve eight or nine hundred students working in all fields of knowledge as well as can a librarian who is working with two hundred students studying in one divisional area.⁴

While a person in charge of all sciences would not be able to give as adequate service to, say, an electrical engineer or a chemist, a better all-around service to all science groups would probably result. The loss would be in a specific subject field, but the gain would be spread over a larger subject area. It should be easier to develop broad subject specialization in the humanities than to expect one circulation assistant to give advisory service in literature and sciences and business.

Apart from specialization of staff, the factor of cost should be even less important in the medium-sized library than in the large library. Distances are usually not great, and there should be less need of duplicating titles. Furthermore, the broad grouping of subjects, such as that in the Worcester Public Library, would make for less overlapping of subject fields, and, hence, less duplication than is inevitable in the more narrowly departmentalized larger libraries.

A variation of subject departmentation may be suggested for providing more adequate all-around service to adults. Instead of subject departments based upon the library's classification scheme, interest departments might be developed similar to those planned for the Washington, D.C., Public Library (see p. 82). Home, occupations, recreational, and business

⁴R. E. Ellsworth, "Colorado University's divisional reading room plan," *College and Research Libraries*, II (March, 1941), pp. 109, 192.

interests are the ones which come to mind first. These need not be collections in separate rooms, but could be alcove arrangements in a large reading room. Specialists on the staff could be developed who, in addition to being responsible for the upkeep and selection of books, would serve both as reference assistants and readers' advisers. Such an arrangement would almost necessitate a librarian of the main library or a head of adult service to avoid duplication and lack of coordination between reference and circulation services.

For the smaller public library a slightly different approach might be desirable. The library could undertake a study of its use, noting the type of use, i.e., material or subject field, the types of users, and the hours of the day when each is most frequent. This information, collected and summarized, would enable the library to decide whether to develop subject specialization in such fields as history, literature, and business, or in such areas as occupations, home interests, and sports and games. Staff members could then be assigned these specialties in accordance with their qualifications, and the periods they serve at public service desks could be based in part upon the time when certain requests are most frequent. In this way, small libraries could develop subject specialties for better service to community groups, while at the same time retaining the necessary flexibility in organization.

PARTIAL DEPARTMENTATION BY SUBJECT.—Among the libraries of this group, only one library has as many as three subject departments, and most of the libraries have only one. Table 20 gives the names and number of subject departments found. In all of the medium-sized libraries there are only sixty-two. The subject department arrangement is apparently more feasible in the large library. This is due in part to the effect of the size of the staff, the arrangement of the building, and the presence of special collections. Thus some of the smaller libraries in Group III, with around thirty staff mem-

TABLE 20
TYPES OF SUBJECT UNITS IN MEDIUM-SIZED LIBRARIES

Subject Units	Group II 89 Libraries	Group III 71 Libraries
Art and music.....	6	19
Technology.....	4*	7
Business.....	4*	7
Local history.....	1	6
General history.....	2	2
History and fine arts.....	..	1
Education.....	..	1
Law.....	..	1
Foreign language.....	1	..
Medical.....	..	1
Archives.....	1	..
All subjects except art and business.....	..	1
Popular.....	..	1

*Two of these departments include both business and technology materials.

bers, have at least one subject department, while some of the libraries, with nearer fifty staff members, have none.

Art and music departments are, by far, the most common. Although there are examples of units concerned solely with art, as well as units concerned solely with music, the most frequent occurrence is a combined art and music department. Technology departments are next in order of frequency. Here, there is a wide variation in terminology, but the material included seems to be relatively uniform, whether the division is labelled "technology" or "science and engineering." Third and fourth in the order of frequency are business departments and local history departments.

ADVANTAGES OF PARTIAL SUBJECT DEPARTMENTATION.—The discussion of partial subject departmentation in the large library is applicable to the medium-sized library and should be consulted (see p. 81). In some respects, the problems in the medium-sized library are more acute, due to the fact that the large public library can recognize the three or four most

important community interests, while the medium-sized library can provide for only one or two. Thus art groups may be adequately served by a separate art department, while business or science groups must depend upon the library's general departments for their needs. This fact has been recognized by some of the libraries visited, and consideration is being given to a solution of the problem.

Where there are few, if any, subject units, one attempted solution has been to develop subject specialization on the part of staff members in the reference and circulation departments. In one library without a business department, for example, circulating books in business are shelved close to the reference department, and the reference assistant with the best business background and experience serves in many respects as a special assistant for business groups. Where building distances are not great, such close cooperation between the reference and circulation departments can help to meet the situation. Furthermore, assistants with specialized backgrounds can assume some responsibility for keeping the subject collections up-to-date and selecting the best books for the library. This type of arrangement is being approached by a number of libraries, and seems to offer excellent prospects for better service to the groups concerned. It has the added advantage of bringing reference and circulation services closer together.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Departmentation into a few broad subject units offers interesting possibilities for the medium-sized library and should be given careful study.

2. Libraries should experiment with the establishment of departments organized around major community and group interests instead of subjects.

3. Building arrangements and size of the staff definitely limit possibilities of further partial departmentation by subject in many libraries. In such instances, attention should be given to developing staff specialization in major subject fields.

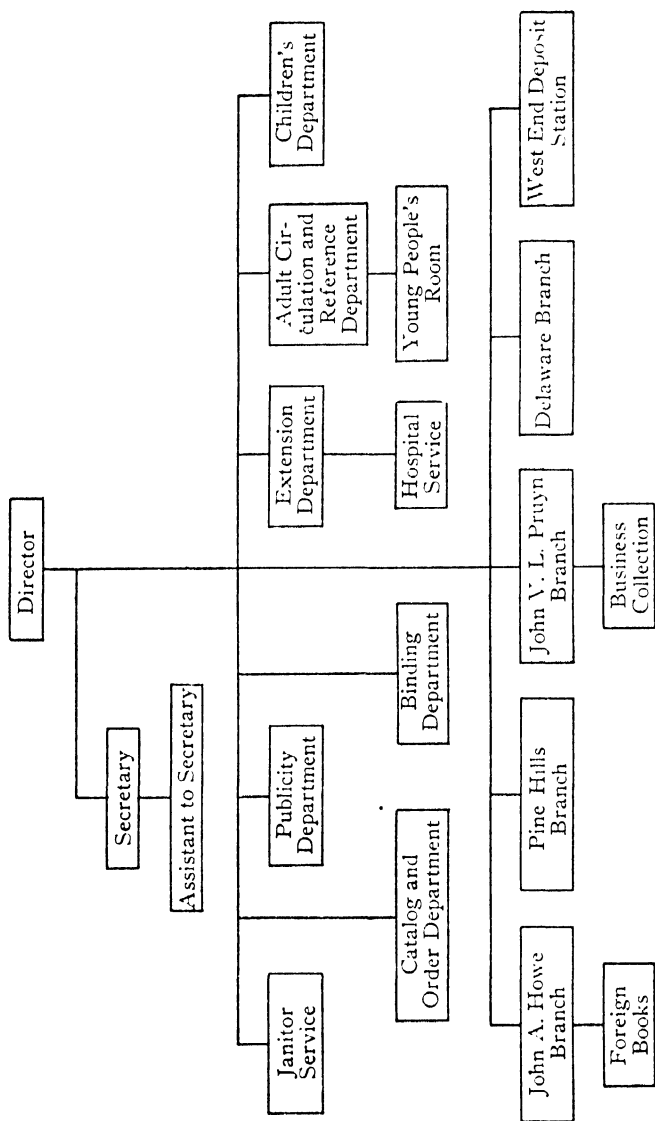


CHART 9. ORGANIZATION CHART FOR THE ALBANY, NEW YORK, PUBLIC LIBRARY

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DIRECTION OF ADULT SERVICES.—Among the libraries in this group, three have made some provision for centralizing responsibility for main library adult services. This type of organization is illustrated in Chart 9, showing the organization of the Albany, New York, Public Library.

In some of the libraries visited, direction of adult services is considered a major responsibility of the librarian or assistant librarian. If the librarian or assistant librarian can effectively direct adult services, well and good, but most of the administrator's time is all too frequently spent on administrative matters. It seems that libraries have lost, somewhat, the coordinated and centralized service to adults that has been found more frequently in children's work.

Many libraries are interested in the possibility of a more effective program for adults. Some have considered centralizing all adult services (at the main library, at least) under one responsible department head. This is especially needed where a few subject departments have been established. Adults using the subject departments receive better service than persons desiring information in fields covered by circulation and reference departments. Then, too, certain phases of the library's adult services are sometimes weak, while others are relatively strong, due, in part, to differences in the energy and efficiency of the respective department heads. In such cases, a single director of work with adults would be responsible for more careful planning. He could take steps to strengthen services which need support, and perhaps reduce those others which are consuming an undue proportion of the library's time and expense.

The success of the adult department in the few instances where it was studied leads one to suggest that a single director might be more universally employed. The librarian, except perhaps in the smaller libraries, cannot always give effective

attention to all adult services because of the pressure of other duties. Such a solution would be more desirable than independent department heads working with a coordinator of adult services. The medium-sized library may need a coordinator, but first it could well have a director of adult work.⁵

RECOMMENDATION.—All main library adult services should be centralized under one responsible department head. In a few cases, this may be done through the librarian or the assistant librarian, but only if such persons have ample time to devote to problems of adult service.

READERS' ADVISORY SERVICE.—Table 21 presents the types of organization for readers' advisory services. It is apparent that there is not much formal provision for such services in the organization scheme. This does not mean that there are no readers' advisers, but simply that separate and distinct organization units have not been set up.

TABLE 21
ORGANIZATION FOR READERS' ADVISORY SERVICES

Type of Organization	Group II 89 Libraries	Group III 71 Libraries
Independent readers' adviser.	4	11
Readers' advisory under circulation department	0	4
Readers' advisory under reference department..	0	1

Advice to readers is a function of every staff member dealing with the public, and establishing that attitude on the part of each staff member is important. At the same time, it may be desirable to have one expert available for highly specialized requests. The fact that no more than twenty readers' advisers were found in the 160 libraries studied may mean only that,

⁵Recent surveys for both Peoria, Illinois, and Brookline, Massachusetts, recommended *Adult Service Divisions*.

in other instances, department heads have a great deal of responsibility for developing advisory services.

It does not seem possible to suggest a point at which readers' advisory service should be established as a special unit in the organization. Three suggestions, however, seem pertinent: First, advisory services are the heart of the library's services, and every effort should be made to develop assistants capable of performing advisory services. Viewed in this light, every member of the staff who works directly with the public is a readers' adviser. Second, where there are numerous special requests for reading guidance and reading courses, a special readers' adviser is probably advisable. Whether or not such a position is essential can be settled only by the individual library in view of its peculiar circumstances. Third, location of responsibility for the development of readers' advisory services on the part of the staff is essential. If the head of circulation, the assistant librarian, or even the librarian can effectively manage this, perhaps no separate readers' adviser is needed. Every library, however, should study its own services carefully to decide whether the job is being done.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Readers' advisory service should be regarded as an important activity of every assistant who deals directly with the public.

2. Where there is the need for developing the attitude of advisory service on the part of each staff member, and where there is the need for someone to handle special requests for reading guidance, it may be desirable to place special responsibility on one member of the staff.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK.—Only a few libraries (eight of 160) have made special provision for young people through the establishment of a separate unit or room. Where separate provision has been made, the service has been set up in all cases as an independent department or a part of the circula-

on department, and almost always with satisfactory results. As some librarians pointed out, unless definite responsibility is placed for service to young adults, there cannot be a vigorous and coordinated program. In some instances, a staff member has been given special responsibility for work with young people, even though no separate department has been established.

DEPARTMENTATION BY TYPE OF MATERIAL.—As one would expect in the medium-sized libraries, few departments are found based upon the type of material handled. Periodical departments are most frequent, but are found in only thirty-two libraries. Several additional libraries have type of material units as a part of the reference department, in nearly all cases for materials which do not circulate, and, hence, are logically placed under the supervision of the reference department. In many other libraries where there are no separate units for periodicals, documents, or newspapers the reference department is responsible for care and use of these materials.

For all except the largest libraries in these groups, it is perhaps unnecessary to have a separate periodicals or document department. Such materials can occupy a section of the shelves, or a table or two in the reference room. Furthermore, use of periodicals, at least, does not require a great deal of personal assistance from the staff; hence, magazine and newspaper reading can be effectively supervised in one reference room.

ORGANIZATION FOR CHILDREN'S WORK

Every one of the medium-sized libraries makes some provision for children's work. All but five libraries have a more or less independent juvenile or children's department. In the few exceptions, children's work is either a function of the extension department or a special unit under extension. The chief difference in the organization for children's work is the

placing of responsibility for children's work in the branches or extension agencies.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHILDREN'S WORK IN BRANCHES.—In principle, much of the discussion of the division of authority for branch children's work in the large library is applicable to the medium-sized library.⁶ But the medium-sized library's branches are neither as large in staff nor in book collection as the branches of a large public library and, hence, there are not as many full-time children's assistants. In some branches, children's work is often handled by a general assistant or by the branch librarian.

Formal procedures and regular patterns are not always found. Even within an individual library, the responsibility may vary, and in one branch the head of children's work may supervise the children's assistant directly, while in a second the relationship may be more of an advisory one. Furthermore, the exact relation is a difficult one to ascertain without investigation on the scene. The few medium-sized libraries visited may not be representative of these libraries as a whole.

Of the eleven libraries visited, five report that the head of the children's department has general supervision over children's work in the branches. Three report that the head of central children's work is in a purely advisory capacity to the branch assistant. As is the case in the large public library, the majority practice seems to place important authority and responsibility with the head of the central children's department.

If there cannot be a trained children's assistant in each branch, close relations with the central children's department are especially desirable. The advice and direction of the head of children's work will not entirely compensate for the lack of specialized training, but it will minimize the loss. Thus, the best specialized talent in the system will be utilized in branch service to children.

⁶See page 87.

If the branch staff is small and assistants must be used for all phases of the branch's service, the assistant in charge of children's work cannot be entirely independent of the branch librarian. If she is, she may regard herself as a children's assistant rather than a branch assistant. Where everyone must do a little bit of all the work of a unit, it is dangerous to undermine the authority of the chief. This does not seem likely to happen if a recognized share of the assistant's time can be given to children's work, and if she is responsible to the head of the children's department for only that portion of her work. A clear understanding, perhaps written, will help to prevent confusion and conflict.

Again in libraries, a large proportion of children's work falls to the branches.

. . . children's direct use of public libraries, in general naturally gravitates to neighborhood libraries (branches) and away from the central business area with its traffic hazards and the inconvenience of distance from outlying communities.¹

If the head of children's work does not have major responsibility, the services of the library's best expert will be lost.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. In the medium-sized library definite responsibility for all children's work should be placed in the hands of the library's best qualified person, usually the children's librarian. She should work closely, however, with the branch librarian.

2. Care should be taken not to undermine the authority of the branch librarian over assistants who work both with adults and with children.

ORGANIZATION FOR EXTENSION SERVICES

While there are a good many types of extension services in medium-sized public libraries, only the larger libraries have

¹H. F. Brigham and H. L. Hughes, *Survey of the Norfolk Public Library*, (Norfolk: Board of Directors, Norfolk Public Library, 1940). (Mimeographed) p. 36.

more than one branch, and, hence, face problems of organization for extension. Three types are found. The first is one in which each extension agency, including branches, is responsible directly to the librarian. In the second type, one department is responsible for all extension services, and even the branch librarians are under its supervision. The third type is the separation of the administration of branches and of other extension agencies. In the last case, there may be one extension department for all agencies except branches, or each station, hospital, etc., may be directly responsible to the librarian.

CENTRALIZATION OF EXTENSION.—In the medium-sized library there seems to be little reason for five or more extension agencies, each independent and directly responsible to the librarian. The problems involved in servicing such agencies, and in coordinating their work, should be more efficiently handled by one extension department. In smaller libraries, this may be accomplished through the efforts of the librarian, and without a separate department.

ORGANIZATION FOR SUPERVISION OF BRANCHES.—Table 22 gives the number of branch librarians reporting directly to the librarian in the ninety-seven libraries where there is no

TABLE 22
RELATION OF BRANCH LIBRARIANS TO LIBRARIAN

Number of Branch Librarians Directly Responsible to Librarian	Number of Libraries	
	Group II 57 Libraries*	Group III 40 Libraries
1 to 2	36	10
3 to 4	13	9
5 to 6	5	13
7 or more	3	8

*Stockton, with a branch department largely for county service, is not included.

branch department or supervisor. In not quite half the libraries, less than five branch librarians are reporting directly to the librarian or assistant librarian. Eighteen libraries have five or six branch librarians directly responsible; and eleven libraries have seven or more. About two-thirds of the librarians prefer to have their branch librarians report directly to them, or, at least, have so provided in their organization.

There may be some question regarding the desirability of a branch supervisor or department head in the medium-sized library. If there are six or more branches, a branch head can contribute much to unify the library's extension program. The librarian will have fewer individuals to supervise, and can thus devote more care to the study and planning of extension services. One librarian, formerly supervising four branches, placed these under the assistant librarian as head of extension services. The resulting consolidation was extremely beneficial. The librarian was not only relieved of a great many details, but a more efficient direction of the extension services resulted. If the librarian must neglect other work or fail to give branches needed direction, he should give careful thought to placing them under a branch department. With seven or more branches, a branch supervisor could simplify extension problems greatly.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. All extension services in the medium-sized library should be centralized into one department unless they are so few in number that the librarian can supervise them effectively.

2. Where there are seven or more branches there should be a branch department head or supervisor.

ORGANIZATION FOR PROCESSING SERVICES

As pointed out in Chapter V, the library activities included under the heading processing services are cataloging, order work, and binding. Table 23 presents the types of organization

TABLE 23
PROCESSING DEPARTMENTS IN MEDIUM-SIZED LIBRARIES

Type of Department	Group II 89 Libraries	Group III 71 Libraries
Catalog department or assistant.....	79	60
Catalog department for children.....	..	1
Catalog and order department.....	6	10
Order department or assistant.....	16	28
Order and binding department.....	..	3
Binding department or assistant.....	17	33

for these services. All but five of the libraries make definite provision for cataloging in some department. In these, cataloging is spread among several different departments or assistants. A few other instances have been found where some cataloging is done by certain specialized library departments, but this is supplementary to rather than a substitute for the regular type of cataloging.

Slightly more than half of the Group III libraries provide definite organization for order work through a department or combination of departments, and nearly half make special provisions for binding and mending. More often than any other library auxiliary service, binding is regarded as a function of some other department or departmental assistant. This is true to a lesser extent for order work.

In the case of both binding and order work, Group III represents the size group where all such activities can be handled by one person, and in some instances one part-time person. This explains to a certain extent the absence of order departments in nearly half of the libraries in Group III. Order work in the medium-sized library is often handled by the librarian, with the cooperation of an assistant or secretary. In addition, where there is no separate department order work is sometimes a part of the functions of the catalog department, even though not distinguished as a separate unit or division.

COMBINATION OF PROCESSING ACTIVITIES.—There are enough examples of combined order and cataloging departments to conclude that such combination is an entirely feasible arrangement. As Mr. Lowe has said:

It is not feasible to elevate every distinct kind of work to the dignity of a department; as long as it can remain, without detriment, part of an existing department's work, it should be allowed to remain so. Thus the order department and the catalog department frequently are combined in one, until their work becomes too highly differentiated.⁸

The combination of order, mending, binding, and cataloging into one technical processes department presents certain problems for the medium-sized library. In the large library, it is possible to get sub-executives for each of these services who are technical experts. In the medium-sized library, however, it may be more necessary for the head of the department to be the technical expert in all the lines of activity. If it is impossible to find such a person, or, at least, one who understands all of the three activities thoroughly, it would seem desirable to consolidate them.

But the advantages to be gained are worth careful consideration. The work of these three units is closely interrelated, especially in the medium-sized library. Central direction can eliminate duplication and provide more efficient division of labor. At the same time, the librarian or assistant librarian could be relieved of the necessity of meeting individually with different staff members for problems which are interdependent.

As in so many other cases, the final answer depends upon many local factors. If the consolidation gives promise of making the library's work more efficient, it could well be done. There is no point in combining library auxiliary services merely to produce a more efficient looking organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—I. Most medium-sized libraries can profitably combine cataloging and order work in one department.

2. Careful consideration should be given to the possibility of establishing one processing department to include cataloging, ordering, mending, and binding.

OTHER AUXILIARY SERVICES

Financial and personnel management, though properly included under the heading auxiliary services, are of sufficient importance to merit separate treatment. They are discussed in Chapters VII and VIII.

Table 24 shows the organization for auxiliary services found in the medium-sized library. While these are universal

TABLE 24
ORGANIZATION FOR AUXILIARY SERVICES

Type of Organization	Group II 89 Libraries	Group III 71 Libraries
Building maintenance		
Building superintendent	2	11
Head janitor	77	34
Miscellaneous (no special organization)...	10	26
Purchase of supplies and finance	18	
Assistant librarian .....	..	1
Assistant to librarian	3	5
Reported as major responsibilities of a secretary	2	12
Exhibits .....	..	1
Publicity	1	3
Printing .....	..	1

activities, in some libraries they are not departmentalized or even recognized as the responsibility of one full-time person. Purchase of supplies and keeping of financial records affords a good example. In the libraries not reported in Table 24,

there is more or less informal provision for these activities—perhaps by the librarian assisted by a secretary or stenographer.

Not all of the units reported in Table 24 are actually departments. This is true of organization for building services. Where there is one full-time janitor as well as other part-time janitors or cleaners, the librarian, in many cases, deals directly with each, and it would be misleading to list them as a department.

No example was found in these libraries of a combination of all business services under one business manager or department. Rather, the predominant practice seems to be to assign responsibility for financial records, supplies, and other business services to the staff member best qualified to handle them. The purchase of supplies, bookkeeping, and accounting are frequently centralized in the librarian's office; and, for most of these libraries, the librarian is in effect the business manager.

Auxiliary services are matters in which size of library is of great importance. For the smaller libraries, a business department would be of doubtful economy. In point of volume of work, the care and cleaning of buildings would be the largest single activity; and there would seem to be little justification for placing accounting, bookkeeping, and the purchase of supplies under a building superintendent merely to group all such activities under one individual.

NEED FOR A BUILDING SUPERINTENDENT.—One librarian with a staff of forty-five, including six building employees, reported that he would not try to run a library without a building superintendent. The establishment of the position resulted in relieving the librarian of concern over a great many details as well as improving much of the work. In this library as well as in several others of comparable size, a well-paid

building superintendent has proved to be an excellent investment.

Where there is a large building or several buildings, trucks, or book wagons, the creation of a department of building or plant maintenance should be considered.⁹

All libraries should give careful consideration to this suggestion.

For the smaller library, it might be inadvisable to employ a building superintendent. And yet it may be desirable to have a head janitor who would, in many respects, be in charge of all building service. Such a person could develop special ability for repairs, supervision of cleaning, and other tasks. With this arrangement, the librarian could deal directly with one individual and could be relieved of the necessity of supervising day-to-day operations. Under such an arrangement, the head janitor could develop a greater feeling of pride and responsibility, and would probably take greater interest in maintaining the library's buildings in a high degree of cleanliness and repair.

PUBLICITY.—Only four libraries in Groups II and III reported a publicity department, and in all cases one full-time assistant was placed in charge. Part-time publicity assistants were found in at least six other libraries. The great majority of librarians in these groups, however, report either no definite responsibility for publicity or responsibility centered in the librarian with the assistance of a department head, an assistant librarian, or some staff member.

Montclair is the smallest library in the group which has a full-time publicity assistant, and the experience there has been most satisfactory. While few other libraries might be able to have a full-time publicity assistant with special ability in the field, they might, nevertheless, place more definite responsibility for publicity in the hands of one or more staff mem-

⁹L. F. Ranlett, "Departments in the library of medium size," *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XXXV (January, 1941), p. 17.

bers. This need not mean paying a high salary for a publicity agent, but the selecting of some staff member whose qualifications seem most suitable, and releasing a part of his time to devote to publicity matters. In the medium-sized library, the librarian is, of course, the only person who can direct the overall public relations program; but he needs assistance to do the job well. A part-time publicity assistant can aid the librarian in handling many of the details of public relations.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Medium-sized libraries should appoint a building superintendent or a qualified head janitor. This is especially desirable where there are several building employees.

2. Definite responsibility for publicity activities should be placed, preferably, if possible, in a full-time assistant. Such an assistant should be close to the librarian and should aid the librarian in the directing of the public relations program.

PROBLEMS IN THE ORGANIZATION OF MEDIUM-SIZED LIBRARIES

THE SPAN OF CONTROL.—Table 25 gives the number of departments and branch librarians responsible directly to the li-

TABLE 25
NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS AND BRANCH LIBRARIANS RESPONSIBLE TO
LIBRARIAN OR ASSISTANT LIBRARIAN

Number of Departments and Branches	Group II 86 Libraries	Group III 71 Libraries
4-5.....	10	0
6-7.....	30	7
8-9.....	25	7
10-11.....	12	26
12-13.....	8	17
14-15.....	1	4
16-17.....	..	3
18-19.....	..	3
20-21.....	..	2
22-23.....	..	0
24-25.....	..	2

brarian or assistant librarian. A large majority of the medium-sized libraries have less than twelve units directly responsible to the librarian or assistant librarian. In the libraries where there are more than fourteen, there are usually several branches and no branch supervisor. It seems clear that these libraries should give serious consideration to the possibility of reducing the number of independent units reporting directly to the librarian.

A dozen department heads does not seem like an impossible number of people for the librarian to supervise. But in the medium-sized library, the librarian usually exercises closer supervision over his departments than in the large library. Thus, while the number of individuals does not seem large, the number and kinds of problems that are brought to the librarian are perhaps more numerous than would be indicated, since he is more concerned with actual operations.

If the librarian is supervising more than eight or nine departments, he should give careful consideration to some means of reducing his span of control. The need for this would have to be determined by the individual librarian, but if much attention is being given to details within the department, consideration should be given to delegating more of these details or grouping departments into larger units.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY COMMENSURATE WITH RESPONSIBILITY.—In the medium-sized libraries, there seems to be a tendency to regard department heads as senior assistants charged with carrying out the routine operations of their units rather than responsible executives with a large degree of freedom in certain phases of the library's services. Many librarians of medium-sized libraries fail to consult their department heads on matters of library policy not specifically concerned with their department but upon which they should be competent advisers. The librarian not only makes most of the

decisions, but makes many of them without advice and consultation from his staff.

The medium-sized library cannot afford a large number of high-salaried executives. But the library can select promising professional assistants, gradually give them added responsibilities, and in the process develop competent department heads. Too often, the wide salary gap between the librarian's salary and the salary of department heads illustrates the degree of importance attached to the latter position. More department heads are capable of exercising authority than many librarians realize; and even where this has not been completely proved, a constant attempt to develop the department heads will often result in unexpected success.

It is not contended that the requisite abilities are not to be found among the members of the present staff, but they cannot be used to full advantage when an organization is broken up into numerous small segments, each of which is headed by an assistant with very limited responsibility and authority.¹⁰

THE GROUPING OF HOMOGENEOUS ACTIVITIES.—The evidence of the present chapter suggests that there may be a slight tendency for medium-sized libraries to group unrelated activities together. Such examples are not numerous, however, and are the exception rather than the rule.

But a word of warning is perhaps in order. It is not always possible to have a full-time staff member to perform certain necessary library functions, and the tendency may be to assign such activities to the person best qualified at the time. In this way, it is possible to build up rather unusual combinations. This may not be serious if it does not go too far, but it is undesirable to build an organization too much around the peculiar qualifications of a few individuals. The library thus tends to establish and modify its services according to the

¹⁰*Organization and administration of the city government of Peoria, Illinois*, (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1940), p. 218.

abilities of its present personnel. This may cause the library to lose sight of its fundamental objectives.

CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF LINES OF AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY.—In the medium-sized library, it is possible to have rather clear lines of authority and responsibility without too many formal devices, and in general no great confusion in this respect was found. This may be attributed largely to the small size of the staff.

A clear understanding, perhaps in writing, would be productive of smoother administration. This is especially true if, as is so often the case, it is necessary to designate certain activities as the part-time responsibility of staff members. If the advice and understanding of the staff is not obtained, staff members formerly accustomed to perform such functions may believe it still to be their responsibility. Overlapping and duplication may thus result. While long practice and experience may make it unnecessary in some cases, most libraries would profit by a clear statement available to all concerned. A job analysis with subsequent reallocation of duties would be an excellent beginning. This should be followed by efforts to acquaint the staff with the situation, and would thus make for better understanding on the part of all concerned.

ORGANIZATION AND MAJOR PURPOSES.—Recognition of the library's major purposes is rarely found in the framework of organization in the medium-sized library (see pages 108-09), and where such recognition is found, it is usually found below the level of major departments.

The major purposes of the medium-sized library may be characterized briefly as informational, educational, and recreational. Little need for extensive research services is found in these libraries. Can the organization reflect these purposes more directly?

The answer to the above question hinges largely on whether

or not the common distinction between circulation and reference services is to be maintained as sharply as in the past. While the reference department normally performs the informational services, it overlaps a great deal with circulation in the performance of educational and advisory services. It would seem that the best answer is a separate information service and an amalgamation of the advisory services of the reference and circulation departments. This might be done under one adult department, or if building and staff permit it, through a few broad subject groupings.

SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION FOR THE MEDIUM-SIZED LIBRARY.—Chart 10 presents a suggested organization for the medium-sized library which borrows heavily from existing types of organization. Three major differences from organizations already in existence are found: First, the assistant to the librarian, whose duties combine publicity with planning and study of library problems. In a few of the libraries in these groups, publicity at least might well be a full-time job. Second, the suggested divisions for the adult department—information, popular, and advisory. In certain of the libraries in these groups, it might be desirable to subdivide the advisory division into a few subject divisions. And third, a coordinator of adult services is established to provide for closer integration between the main library and the extension department services to adults. In the smaller library in this group, this could well be the function of the assistant to the librarian or the assistant librarian.

The suggested organization provides for eight persons responsible directly to the librarian, a reasonably workable number. It provides for a homogeneous grouping of activities; it recognizes in the organization the library's major purposes; and it provides for closer integration between the main library and branch services—an important problem in many libraries.

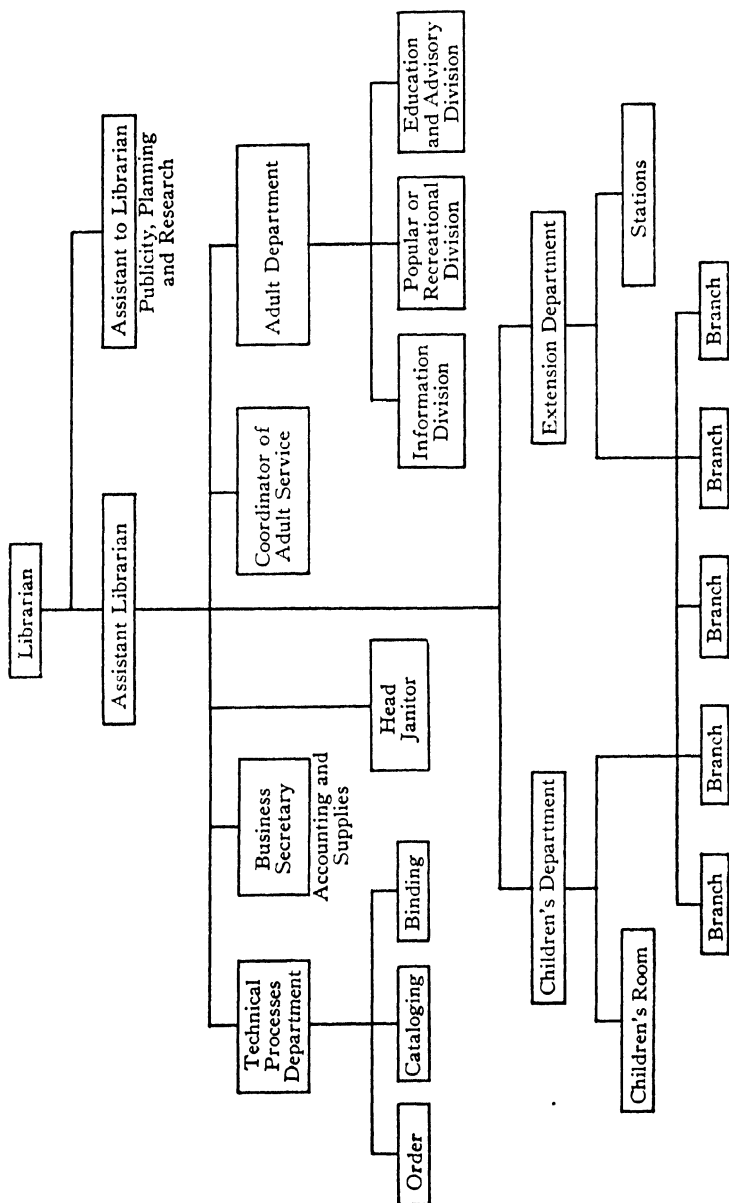


CHART 10. SUGGESTED ORGANIZATION FOR THE MEDIUM-SIZED LIBRARY

It is suggested that many of the features of this organization may be profitably adopted by most medium-sized libraries.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Libraries with more than eight or nine departments or units should employ one or more means to reduce the span of control.

2. Librarians should make continuous efforts to develop capable department heads and delegate more responsibility to such heads.

3. Libraries should establish and define clear lines of authority and responsibility.

4. Careful thought should be given to means of recognizing the library's major purposes in the organization structure.

CHAPTER VII

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, which lies at the very heart of library administration, involves planning and carrying out an intelligent budget program, and, hence, touches every phase of the library's activities. All library services are affected by the way in which money is acquired, controlled, and expended. Financial management is thus a most important over-all administrative area.

Two variables have a significant effect upon financial management in American public libraries. One is the law and practice which determines the relation of a given library to other governmental agencies. As pointed out in Chapter II, it is in the field of finances that governmental controls are most frequently found, and there is evidence that financial controls are increasing. Fiscal administration in a library governed by an annual, rigidly segregated city appropriation, required to use uniform city expenditure classifications, and under the close accounting control of a city comptroller, obviously, is not the same as that of a library with a fixed tax levy and complete discretion in the control and expenditure of its income.

The second major variable is the size of the library system. Preparing and executing a budget of over two million dollars in the Chicago Public Library require an organization and a formal set of controls and procedures which fortunately are not all necessary in Knoxville.

Despite the variables of legal control and size, sound principles are applicable to public libraries of all legal forms and sizes.¹ The present chapter, therefore, in examining the financial management of public libraries, emphasizes the principles which have general application. The subject may be divided as follows: Organization for financial management, budget

¹See E. A. Wight, *Public library finance and accounting*, A.L.A., 1943.

preparation, budget adoption, budget execution, and external check-up or audit.

ORGANIZATION FOR FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The location of authority and responsibility for financial matters is not easy to determine. In a large number of libraries, one person or one department has responsibility for all financial matters, while in others responsibilities vary widely. In the following discussion, it has been found most satisfactory to present various phases of financial management indicating the persons responsible for each.

Preparing the budget is perhaps the first step. Table 26 indicates the persons responsible for preparing the library's budget, as reported by 244 libraries.

Several facts regarding responsibility for budget preparation stand out. First, it is evident that the librarian, as chief administrative officer, is responsible for budget preparation in the large majority of instances. Second, the library board plays an active part in a substantial number of the smaller libraries. In fifteen cases, the board, a board committee, or a board member is responsible for preparing the budget;² in twenty-three others, the board's role was considered sufficiently important to warrant reporting participation jointly with the librarian. Third, in the larger libraries, the librarian is more directly dependent upon a financial assistant for active aid in budget preparation. Thus in eighteen of the twenty-six libraries in Groups V and VI, the librarian, in effect, has the services of a budget officer. The librarian of the smaller library is, with few exceptions, his own budget investigator.

Control of the budget program after its adoption involves the approval of individual expenditures, and hinges largely upon the library's accounting and reporting system. The per-

²For most of these libraries, the questionnaire clearly indicated that this meant the actual preparation of the program, and not merely legal responsibility.

TABLE 26
RESPONSIBILITY FOR BUDGET PREPARATION

	Library Size Groups						
	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	Group V	Group VI	Totals
Board, board committee, or board member	7	7	1	..	..	..	15
Librarian and board, board committee, or board member	3	12	5	1	1	1	23
Librarian	27	62	37	7	5	..	138
Librarian and assistant librarian	..	2	7	2	2	..	13
Librarian and one or more department heads	..	3	3	..	..	..	6
Librarian and financial or executive assistant	..	2	6	2	5	10	25
Librarian and secretary	..	..	8	..	..	..	8
Financial or executive assistant	..	..	4	..	1	..	5
No report	9	1	..	..	..	1	11
Totals	46	89	71	12	14	12	244

TABLE 27
RESPONSIBILITY FOR KEEPING LIBRARY ACCOUNTS

	Library Size Groups					
	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	Group V	Group VI
City or school district department or officer*	5	5	5	1	..	..
Board, board officer, or board employee	10	10	2	..	1	2
Librarian	12	31	2	..	..	..
Librarian and financial or executive assistant	..	4	1	1	..	..
Assistant librarian	1	5	7	..	1	..
Finance department, financial or executive assistant	4	10	15	4	12	9
Secretary to librarian	..	10	29	3	..	..
Other staff members	1	5	5	3	..	..
Private accountants	..	3	1	..	..	..
No report	13	6	4	..	..	1
Totals	46	89	71	12	14	12
						16
						25
						45
						6
						14
						54
						42
						14
						4
						24
						244

*The small number of city officers reported indicates that most librarians were reporting on the keeping of accounts within the library, regardless of whether official accounts are kept by the city.

sons having major responsibility for keeping library accounts in 244 libraries are indicated in Table 27.

Direct exercise of accounting responsibility by the librarian is reported in forty-five instances, and with one exception is confined to the small libraries in Groups I and II. Actual accounting by the board or a board officer is found in twenty-five libraries, also, for the most part, in the smallest groups. In nine of these cases, the accountant is not a board member, but is an employee responsible directly to the board and independent of the librarian. The librarian's secretary serves as accountant in forty-two libraries.³ In the larger libraries, accounting more frequently requires at least one full-time finance officer.

Responsibility for general supervision of budget execution is almost universally vested in the librarian. He approves individual expenditures and is charged with the task of seeing that the library comes out even. There are a few exceptions. The librarian is relieved of this responsibility in some of the smaller libraries where the board prepares the budget, keeps the accounts, and approves each expenditure. Even in a few of the larger libraries, the board exercises control over budget execution through an employee, theoretically, at least, independent of the librarian.

INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL OFFICER.—Several libraries have or have had chief financial officers who, in legal theory and to varying degrees in practice, are independent of the chief librarian and report directly to the library board. All that can be said in favor of this plan is that it is harmless when the legal fiction is ignored. In Los Angeles, for example, the chief accounting employee, in fact, reports to the board through and

³Interestingly, most of the libraries, twenty-nine out of forty-two, are in Group III, and constitute nearly one-half of the Group III libraries. Evidently, in this size range, the need for accounting assistance is felt—yet without the intensity that results in a special financial assistant in most of the larger libraries.

works closely under the direction of the chief librarian. At its worst, the two-headed arrangement results in friction and annoying disunity in the library's administration. Cincinnati's board wisely recognized, ten years ago, that the chief librarian's unimpaired executive authority should be restored, and by formal resolution established the existing channels of authority from board, through librarian, to executive secretary. In the several smaller libraries in which the library accountant is independent of the librarian, the latter is deprived of one of the chief management tools. If the independence makes immediate financial information in the form desired by the librarian difficult to get, then duplicate records are the only alternative to virtual abdication as administrator of the library.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—I. The chief librarian should have definite responsibility for the preparation and execution of the budget program. It has long been recognized by experts in the field of public administration that the one person in a public organization who is in the best position to prepare and oversee the execution of the budget program is the chief executive.

This principle has direct application to public libraries, and either to deny the librarian the authority or to relieve him of major responsibility with respect to these phases of the financial program, is to undermine his position as chief executive of the library.

2. Under the librarian, definite responsibility should be located for each financial activity—accounting, preparation of reports, compilation of budget data, and purchasing.

3. Related financial activities should be centralized in a single person or a single organization unit. Scattering them haphazardly deprives the librarian of the unified facilities and more expert assistance which centralization affords.

4. Adequate expert assistance should be given the librarian in managing the library's finances. Here, size of the library will have an important bearing. In the larger libraries, a finan-

cial department will be needed, while in the smaller libraries, a financial assistant may suffice.

BUDGET PREPARATION

There is a great deal of variation in the care with which the library's budget is prepared. At one extreme lies the library which merely repeats last year's figures. At the other is the library which each year makes a searching re-examination of its program. Of the forty-two libraries visited, few approach the latter, and, in the great majority of cases, budget preparation is perfunctory, based largely on last year's expenditures.

ESTIMATING INCOME.—Many of the libraries visited make no attempt to estimate income other than using last year's figures, while several report satisfaction with estimates supplied by the city tax collector or comptroller. Several libraries make no estimate of receipts from library sources, such as fines, and follow the practice of using such income as a reserve to be used for unplanned expenditures as the librarian sees fit.

The library's estimate of its income from taxes is necessarily tentative. Where the library is supported by a fixed levy, the best available estimates of the assessed valuation of taxable property must be secured. When the city appropriations for library support are flexible, appropriations for previous years are useful guides but nothing more.

ESTIMATING EXPENDITURES.—In most public libraries the initial preparation of expenditure requests is made by the librarian, or, in the larger libraries, by his financial assistant. With the exception of a few isolated attempts, most of which are now discontinued, no formal means have been employed to give department heads major responsibility for estimating expenditures. Oakland, alone among the libraries investigated, reports regular written departmental budget requests. Many other libraries, of course, arrange informal conferences between the budget officer and the various department heads.

There are certain advantages to be gained by decentralizing the initial responsibility for estimating expenditures. Because he is close to the firing line, the head of a department is in the best position to prepare a work program for his unit. His intimate knowledge of operating conditions and needs should be exploited. In the process, the necessity for analysis, for careful planning, and for a considered justification of his requests should encourage greater initiative and help build better service.

The chief objections voiced to formal expenditure estimates by department heads may be summarized under three points: (1) The department heads will ask for much more than can possibly be granted. (2) Most of the library's expenditures—salaries, heat, and light—are fixed so that discretion is too limited to warrant time-consuming departmental estimates. (3) The librarian knows the departmental needs as well as his department heads, or at least can get any information he needs informally.

These objections have varying degrees of validity. A careful statement of budget policy is the antidote for the first, and the librarian who receives a request which is unreasonably large probably has himself to blame. Departmental estimates should not be based solely on what the department could use to advantage. They should be prepared within the limits, flexible though they be, which the librarian and board have defined.

To say, as in the second instance, that expenditures are largely fixed, is in all likelihood to give encouragement, perhaps unwittingly, to their remaining fixed from year to year. Frequent major operations on the salary budget are extremely difficult. But, if one department has acute personnel needs which can be justified, those needs should be presented, and if of sufficient importance, should be met.

Finally, is there not something rather seriously amiss in a library of any size in which the librarian knows detailed

departmental needs as well as his department heads do? To the argument that informal means of securing the necessary information from department heads are sufficient, there is no convincing answer, provided that in a given library they are actually used, and the department heads are encouraged and expected to study and plan and report. Some librarians have felt that annual departmental reports, or pre-budget conferences, or perhaps informal written statements of unusual departmental needs served the purpose.⁴ A few libraries use estimate forms only for certain budget items. Detroit, for instance, sends monthly request sheets to department heads, on which are to be listed any furniture or equipment items desired for inclusion in the next year's budget. While providing a regular opportunity for examining furniture and equipment needs, this system is largely designed to allow the library's purchasing agent more time for careful study of sources, prices, and quality of the items embraced. Baltimore asks department heads to write a statement of their book needs for the coming year. In Washington, a regular form is used for getting similar information from main and branch librarians.

AIDS IN BUDGET PREPARATION.—The Oakland and Montclair public libraries report marked success with a preliminary announcement of general budget policy. Montclair drew up a statement of "principles to be incorporated in the 1939 budget" which served as an authoritative and useful guide in preparing the estimates. This is announced before any preliminary expenditure requests are prepared, and serves to prevent useless effort and keen disappointment.

A budget calendar, adapted to the individual library's needs and to the fiscal year, is helpful. Thus, a deadline for regular departmental requests may be fixed, together with a time for regular discussions between the librarian and his department heads regarding the tentative budget. Other dates included are a time for submission of the budget to the library board for

⁴Los Angeles, Seattle, and Pasadena, respectively, are examples.

discussion and adoption, and the time when the library must submit its budget to a city appropriating body.

The expenditure experience of each of the several preceding years is indispensable in budget preparation. Progressive cities have long recognized this fact, and model budget estimate forms present consecutive columns for each of the two fiscal years most recently completed, along with the column for the current year, which must be partially estimated. On such a form, the trend in any object of expenditures is clearly indicated on a horizontal line.

Libraries which have prepared and used a long-term budget plan are unanimous in commending the practice. A five- or six-year plan, into which the annual budget is geared, permits a longer view of an organization's activities, and gives a better perspective into which a given year's program may be fitted.

A uniform annual budget request form may be superior to a haphazard and non-uniform system. Such a form might well embrace personal services, other operating expenses, books, and outlays for improvements or equipment, and should compare each with previous years.

Other aids which can make a contribution to successful library budget planning include: Cost accounting, which, now that the ice has been broken, should play a significant role;⁵ special studies evaluating various phases of the library's service; surveys of branch book needs, such as a recent one in the District of Columbia Library which included comparison of book stock, staff, registration, and circulation; and job analyses. In Gary, Indiana, for example, upon discovery of the large amount of time consumed in connection with book reserves, a reorganized and more efficient system was instituted. Illustrations of this sort are numerous. Basically, they all reflect the attitude that next year's budget should be critically approached with the idea of better service at less cost constantly in mind. Throughout the entire process, the librarian

⁵See E. A. Wight, *op. cit.*

should make certain that every staff member is encouraged to contribute his ideas, and that somewhere along the line each idea is given respectful consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. A careful estimate of all income should be an integral part of budget preparation.

2. Department heads should play an important part in making preliminary estimates of expenditures. Some formal procedure is to be preferred to a haphazard or informal arrangement.

3. Budget preparation should be preceded by an announcement of general budget policy for the year.

4. Among the aids to budget preparation which may be recommended to libraries are: budget calendars, recapitulations of past years' expenditures, long-term budget programs, uniform budget request forms, and cost analyses.

5. The library's budget should be comprehensive, embracing every source of library revenue and every proposed expenditure. The necessary segregation of special funds which have legally prescribed uses does not violate this principle. The budget plan should also be a unified one. A few librarians present the proposed book budget, the salary budget, and the construction, repair, and maintenance budget to separate board committees for independent consideration. This is to subject an over-all program to a piece-meal approach in which inter-relationships are ignored.

BUDGET ADOPTION

Thirty-eight of the forty-two libraries visited depend upon the action of an external governmental body for final adoption of the budget program, while decision of the library board is final in four cases. Some library boards have authority for final action with respect to certain library funds and their expenditure. Nineteen of the libraries visited receive a lump sum appropriation and have complete, or nearly complete, discretion in the expenditure of appropriated funds throughout the year.

The care with which the library's budget request is presented to the appropriating authority varies widely. An excellent illustration of careful budget presentation is Mr. Kaiser's practice in Oakland.⁹ Not very many of the libraries visited, however, approach this standard. All too frequently the request involves only a single figure without any supporting data.

ADVANTAGES OF A CAREFUL BUDGET REQUEST.—Several librarians pointed out that there was no use in preparing a detailed budget request, as there was no chance of getting a sympathetic hearing from the city fathers. Even if the possibility of such a hearing is remote, the chances would seem better if the library presents a careful and complete request with supporting data. Furthermore, continued attempts on the part of a library to gain a hearing for a careful budget request may eventually result in success, even if the first few attempts fail.

In the future there will be greater demand that the library's budget request be supported by analysis of the library's public service and its needs. This will require more accurate measures of the demand, the social value, and the cost of library service. It will be no easy task, but the library's future as a governmental agency competing with other tax supported bodies is in the balance.

RECOMMENDATION.—The library's budget request should be a careful and complete document analyzing the library's needs and presenting supporting data to justify the cost of services which the library offers.

BUDGET EXECUTION

Once the library's funds have been appropriated, the library is faced with the problem of putting its financial program into operation. It must set up the machinery necessary to see that

⁹J. B. Kaiser, "Winning support," in Carl Vitz, ed., *Current problems in public library finance*, (Chicago: A.L.A., 1933), pp. 100-05.

funds are spent as needed and that funds are properly controlled. Among the steps to be considered are: a time schedule of expenditures, proper accounting controls, the classification of accounts, the transfer of funds, and budget reports.

ALLOTMENT SYSTEM.—An allotment system provides the means whereby the time schedule of expenditures may be controlled. In its simplest form, it means postponing such expenditures as can be harmlessly delayed until the library has received adequate income to finance them without borrowing. Los Angeles, for example, postpones its periodical contract, and Indianapolis postpones equipment purchases.

A more complete allotment system means planning carefully the time of all expenditures for the coming year, usually on a monthly or quarterly basis. Of the libraries visited, six operate under a city-wide allotment schedule, but in several additional libraries, a time schedule is used for book expenditures.

Various examples of the allotment of book funds are found. Louisville, with a fiscal year beginning September 1, follows the general plan of spending one-half of the annual book budget during the first three months. Baltimore follows the allotment plan of eleven per cent for each of three months, eight per cent the next three, six per cent during the summer, and eight per cent for each of the fall months.⁷ In Los Angeles a rather strict one-twelfth per month is imposed in order to keep an even keel in various work loads; for example, a cataloger who specializes in science books has a steady demand upon her time. Pasadena uses as a guide for monthly expenditures one-eleventh of the annual total, thus planning to wind up regular book purchases early in the final month of the fiscal year. In Detroit, each department and branch head plans his book expenditures by quarters, and when approved by the librarian, this becomes his allotment schedule for the year.

⁷This division was made after a careful study of the library's book-buying curve over several years.

REQUISITES OF AN ALLOTMENT SYSTEM.—An intelligent allotment system depends upon detailed work programs of the various library operating units. To limit automatically all expenditures under any object classification to one-twelfth during each month, or even to one-fourth in each quarter, is obviously not very satisfactory. Periodical subscriptions, the bulk of which can best be let in a single annual contract, are a case in point. Just as a sensible public works department allotment for the month of July does not include one-twelfth of the annual expenditure for snow clearance, so a sound library allotment system provides for seasonal variations as needed.

An allotment system need not preclude variations. Some librarians have correctly pointed out that no time schedule of expenditures prepared in advance can be perfect, and have expressed apprehension lest an allotment system impose harmful restrictions on the librarian's managerial discretion. However, in the case of an allotment scheme prepared for the library's own purposes, a justifiable exception may be allowed. The more carefully the system is prepared, the fewer such exceptions will be; and the automatic calling of the matter to the attention of a budget control officer is useful, especially in a large organization in which budget control is to a large degree impersonal. Even if the allotment is used only as a guide for department heads who may vary from it at their discretion, it is an advance over expenditure planlessness.

ACCOUNTING.—This survey has made no attempt to assemble complete information regarding the keeping of library accounts.⁸ Instead, there are presented here certain problems which have been studied.

A troublesome question in several libraries is the duplication of accounts between the city and the library. Mr. Chatters has well pointed out that "accounts are maintained primarily

⁸For a discussion of library accounting, see E. A. Wight, *op. cit.*, chap. VI.

for the purpose of informing those who are responsible for an activity.”⁹ The failure to recognize this salient fact is often responsible for the duplication in library accounting. If the official accounts are kept by the city, and if they are not so designed as to provide the library immediately with the information needed in successful library management, there is no other course than for the library to set up its own accounting system. Where the city keeps general control accounts, and the library keeps a detailed breakdown geared to the city accounts, little, if anything, is lost by the duality. An arrangement somewhat along these lines is almost inevitable in the largest libraries.

However, some instances of duplication are not so easily excused. If the official city accounts are detailed on a pattern unsuitable for library purposes, the library must forcefully and ably present its case for correction of this situation. Again quoting Mr. Chatters, “It is only reasonable for the fiscal officers to keep accounts in a manner generally accepted by librarians as necessary for library administration.”¹⁰ Pasadena affords an excellent example of friendly cooperation between the librarian and an able city controller. Within the major headings of salaries, other expenses, and outlays, which are uniform throughout the city, the library’s account breakdowns are adapted to library needs. In addition, information in whatever detail desired by the library is furnished regularly, as well as when specially requested, and the library is relieved of the need of any formal accounts whatever.

Two other cases are illustrative. In each of two cities, an independent administrative survey¹¹ criticized the trouble and

⁹C. H. Chatters, “Financing the library as a municipal service,” in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues in library administration*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 214.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹The surveys referred to were made by different research organizations. The first was a general city survey; the second, an intensive study of the library system.

expense involved in duplicated library accounting. The reply of the first library was that official city library accounts were not adequate for internal library control. Despite generally friendly relations with the city government, however, the library one year later had made no approach to the city officers to see if the information needed could be regularly supplied. In the second case, the library's finance officer keeps an elaborate homemade set of accounts which are an heritage from the days before the central government installed an adequate system. Not only do the account classes which are kept in detail by both agencies differ, but the library accounts are on a cash basis, while the central ones properly reflect outstanding obligations. As a result, the monthly reconciliation which the library performs has become a major operation.

A concerted effort at mutual understanding should bring about Mr. Chatter's goal: "There should be one set of library accounts and they should be kept in a manner useful to the librarian and at the same time sufficient to permit any control delegated to the general municipal government."¹²

Another accounting problem found in libraries is how to classify library accounts. It is at once obvious that the classification of expenditures should conform with the classification of the budget. But within the budget framework there are wide possibilities for detailed expenditure breakdowns. These have, in many cases, been prescribed by an outside governmental body, often the city, occasionally the state. In twenty-seven of the forty-two libraries visited, library accounts must be kept according to a prescribed classification. In a few cases, uniformity is required only in the major divisions, and libraries may use whatever further object breakdown best meets their needs. Where free to develop their own plan, libraries are more and more adapting to the American Library Association Public Library Statistical Report form, in most instances

¹²"Financing the library as a municipal service," in C. B. Joeckel, ed., *Current issues in library administration*, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

utilizing a more detailed breakdown needed for management purposes.

The most progressive treatment of the subject of public expenditure classification in recent years has been that of the Municipal Finance Officers Association. In the publications of that association, the various methods of classification that have practical value for management purposes are clearly described.

Librarians are already making use of the following classification bases: *Organization units*, which for example might treat the main library and individual branches separately; *character*, which classes separately current expenses, capital outlay, and debt service; *object*, the breakdown of expenditures into such items as salaries, books, periodical, rent, and supplies. Still another classification is *activities*, which municipal finance experts feel has, in some respects, most to offer management. For libraries, this would mean that basic activities such as cataloging, service to children, and reference work, would be major headings under which expenditure objects would be grouped. The advantages would be a clearer picture of the share of the library's resources devoted to definite phases of its program, and an approach in the direction of cost accounting without much of the intricacy, and, it must be added, some of the accuracy, of a true cost accounting program.

A third problem is whether or not to keep accounts on an accrual basis. In accrual accounting, outstanding obligations are reflected as expenditures at the time the obligation is incurred. The true condition of a periodical account, to illustrate, in which \$200 was appropriated, \$150 has been paid out, and bills for \$40 are outstanding, is that \$190, or all but \$10 has been expended. An account showing only the \$150 actually paid out is misleading. Formal accrual accounting requires a correction whenever final payment of an obligation differs slightly from the amount first recorded, as is sometimes the case, and some libraries feel that it is a burden. The important

thing, of course, is to secure accurate information quickly and easily. Some libraries follow the practice of filing outstanding vouchers under each account number for ready reference. This is a less formal method which may satisfactorily supplement a cash accounting system if the number of items involved is small.¹³

A fourth accounting problem revolves around where records of book expenditures should be kept—in the order or in the accounting department. The detailed check on book expenditures need not be duplicated in both departments, and if regularly reported by the accounting department, it can be advantageously centered there. Regardless of where kept, a regular book appropriation ledger, with separate account numbers for each unit's allocation, and encumbrances as well as cash disbursements recorded, is much more satisfactory and in most instances easier to keep than a homemade system. The latter are frequently on elusive notebook paper, are usually intelligible to only one person, are subject to error, as erasures and corrections occasionally testify, and are of uncertain value as a permanent record.

An accurate system of records relating to book expenditures need in no way impose a rigid pattern. The chief purpose is informative and any degree of discretion desired may be allowed the department head. In one library visited, periodical purchases are made along with other expenditures from a general appropriation for *expense*. In addition to the annual contract, individual requests are approved or disapproved by the librarian throughout the year. To find the amount which has been spent for periodicals at any time, a special search is necessary, and in practice it is only at the end of the budget year that the periodical expenditures actually come to light. A sound system here need not prevent the librarian's approval of any particular request; it would, however, prevent the decision from being made in the dark, and might well indicate

¹³See also E. A. Wight, *op. cit.*

automatically any proposed deviation from a predetermined plan.

TRANSFERS OF FUNDS.—No matter how carefully a budget is drawn up there will need to be some changes as unforeseen conditions arise. Thus, there should be some provision for transfers of funds from one budget item where they are not needed to another where they are.

In libraries which receive a lump sum appropriation, transfers may be made as the library wishes. However, in all of the nineteen libraries in which appropriations are segregated to some degree, the approval of city officials is necessary for expenditure transfers.

Some of these libraries are greatly handicapped by law and practice, which makes variations from a rigidly segregated budget almost impossible. The majority of libraries studied, however, have a substantial measure of freedom in such matters. The law is clear in some cities; in others, it is uncertain or in dispute. Traditions of library independence occasionally make the practice of complete discretion in budget execution clear.¹⁴ Effective city control in some instances extends only to transfers between major appropriation classes—salaries, other expenses, books, outlays—and leaves minor transfers within each class to library discretion. Some approximation of this type of control will best meet the needs of both city government and library, and, if administered wisely, can be made to provide flexibility wherever necessary.

Regardless of whatever budget transfers may be permitted, every effort should be made to keep them at a minimum and to control them carefully. Mr. Sherman has well pointed out that more careful budget building, less guesswork, padding, and loose spending are accompaniments of restrictions on budget changes.¹⁵ This has been the experience in Detroit,

¹⁴For example, Knoxville and Portland.

¹⁵C. E. Sherman, "The library budget," in Carl Vitz, ed., *Current problems in public library finance*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

Rochester, and Gary. Also, there is no better way to secure the confidence of an appropriating body than to build a record of close correlation between budget plans and actual expenditures. Greater respect for detailed future requests and the basis of their defense is inevitable.¹⁶

Within the library itself, the procedure for budget transfers shows considerable variation. A desirable system should provide that any proposed overspending of a budget account or any budget transfer is automatically checked in the accounting controls and requires approval of the chief librarian. For all minor changes and transfers within major budget classes, this should be sufficient. Major transfers involving policy matters may require board approval, but should be made only upon the librarian's recommendation.

BUDGET REPORTS.—In a large majority of the libraries visited, some sort of monthly financial report is made, although often the report is poorly organized for budget control purposes. Regularity of reports is as important as reasonable frequency, and, as a general rule, the monthly period seems to be most satisfactory. Practice is equally unsatisfactory in each of three libraries which respectively: has a rule providing for weekly reports which seems to be too exacting and is in fact largely ignored; has a report almost every month; has no reports because the information is available at any time. A librarian who gets budgetary reports only at six, ten, and eleven months is perhaps in a slightly more defensible position.

The principle of budgetary reports is simple, and applies to libraries of all sizes. The objective is to supply the chief executive with regular information, so clearly presented that with a minimum of effort actual experiences in revenues and expenditures can be compared with the preconceived plan. At

¹⁶Portland, Oregon, finds this to be true as the county appropriating body tends toward more careful scrutiny of the library's budget requests.

a glance, any variations from the plan should be revealed, and hence the factual basis is laid for whatever revisions in the plans for the remainder of the budget year may be necessary or desirable. As to the exact form in which such reports should be made, legal requirements and library size will be important factors.

Reports on revenues will be most vital for the libraries that are largely independent of the city, with a special library fund or funds from which all library obligations must be paid. In such cases, monthly reports which classify all revenue by sources, and compare cumulative experience for each source with the annual estimate and with the experience of the past year or two will be invaluable. Prompt revision of expenditure plans in the light of revenue experience can forestall unnecessary borrowing or serious deficits.

Monthly reports on expenditures are perhaps the most important budget control device the librarian has. There is much to be gained in developing and utilizing a regular form in which these reports will be most useful in a given library. Typed reports which vary in content and arrangement, though used in some libraries, are much less satisfactory.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Libraries should develop an allotment system based on the work needs of the various services and taking into account previous expenditure experience.

2. Librarians and city officials should avoid duplication in the keeping of library accounts. In some instances, libraries can adapt their records to the city scheme. In other instances, some adjustment of city accounts will furnish the library with much of the information it needs.

3. Libraries should set up an accounting classification which will give information regarding expenditures by activities, e.g. cataloging, reference, and service to children.

4. The library's financial system should provide for the

checking and approving of transfers or changes from the budget plan.

5. The library should have a well-designed system of regular budget reports.

AUDIT

The final step in a complete budget program is an independent post-audit. Table 28 indicates provision for audit as reported by 244 libraries.

TABLE 28
PROVISION FOR AUDIT REPORTED IN 244 LIBRARIES

	Number of Libraries
Board of education, city or county agency.....	60
State agency.....	21
Board, board committee, or board officer.....	22
Private firm.....	28
Librarian.....	13
Other staff member.....	11
No audit.....	7
Not reported.....	82
Total.....	244

Pre-audit was undoubtedly understood by some of those which reported auditing by the librarian or a staff member. While only seven libraries specifically reported that no audit was made of library transactions, it seems evident from the large number failing to report on the item that this condition is more widespread. In addition, a number of the city audits reported are partial, while others are perfunctory.

Sound practice, in both business and government, demands an external check as a safeguard of the proper use of funds by the administration. To be truly independent, an audit should be made by persons in no way selected, controlled, or influenced by those who exercise the authority to make expenditures or who are charged with keeping the accounts. Practices equally indefensible are failure to provide for any

post-audit, and a post-audit by the officer, perhaps a board auditor, who also exercises the pre-auditing and accounting functions. Where the librarian is, in fact, the chief executive, exercising a delegated authority to incur obligations, make expenditures, and supervise the library accountant, there is much to be said for the practice whereby the library board calls in an auditing firm for a competent annual audit. In all probability, however, governmental requirements will more and more provide for an audit of library accounts to be made by public agencies.

RECOMMENDATION.—Every library should have a careful annual audit by an outside agency.

MODERN BUDGET PRACTICES AND "RED TAPE."—Sound principles are applicable to public libraries of all legal forms and sizes. Careful budget planning, effective control of budget execution in the interests of maximum public service, and accountability for the library's use of public funds should be the objectives of library management. What the well-governed cities require of their libraries is nothing more.¹⁷ In some instances, the city's initiative has necessitated the strengthening of the library's budget system. In other libraries virtually free from city regulations, the need for modern budgeting practices has been felt and supplied from within. Improved library management is the result in both types of cases. It is in the cities where financial administration is unenlightened or colored by a general atmosphere of misgovernment that restrictions and controls become a real burden to the library and a major obstacle to best library practice.

One frequently finds a tendency to discount the value of formal financial devices. Only when he is certain that he

¹⁷See National Committee on Municipal Accounting. *Municipal accounting statements*, revised edition (Chicago: National Committee, 1941) (Bulletin No. 12, June, 1941), pp. 1-19, 201-02, John M. Pfiffner, *Municipal administration*, (New York: Ronald, 1940), pp. 82-128, and A. E. Buck, *Public budgeting*, (New York: Harpers, 1929).

achieves the same end through less formal means can the librarian in a smaller organization dismiss the procedure as too formal. Red tape is a familiar bugaboo, but regularized financial controls are of value in any organization. They can be made to save time and trouble rather than impose more paper work on an already busy office. An excellent illustration is the regular monthly budget report which compares the actual expenditures and receipts, classified by objects and sources, with the estimates in each case. A librarian who says, "I can get that information whenever I want it," is in the position of not knowing that the regular examination of such information is essential in intelligent budget control, or else has to take the time to dig out the pertinent information. Perhaps he asks for occasional reports, which vary from one time to the next as to contents and the form of their presentation, and thus have little or no value as a permanent record or for comparative purposes.

But, important as it is to regard financial management as a device to secure, control, and expend funds honestly and efficiently, it represents the means by which the library's plans are translated into services. Thus, it should be thought of not as an arbitrary and independent activity but as the reflection of the library's program in terms of dollars and cents; and financial management should be judged in the light of the assistance which it gives to library administration. If regarded in this light, it can become a valuable tool in making the library an efficient, progressive, and forward-looking institution.

CHAPTER VIII

PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

A VITAL PROBLEM in any public service organization is that of securing and keeping a competent staff. But the job of library personnel management does not end here; it must include provisions to keep the staff working with maximum efficiency, in complete harmony, and with an enthusiastic interest in the improvement of the library's service.

Successful personnel management requires both sound procedures and sympathetic, intelligent administration of those procedures. The personnel practices of a given library are not difficult to describe and evaluate—the spirit with which they are applied, however, is difficult to assess. Such a study as this, because it must emphasize the methods, important as they are, does not reveal the entire picture. This should be borne in mind in considering the following discussion. At the same time, it is well to point out that personnel management has a better chance of being successful if it is based upon sound practices and methods.

ORGANIZATION FOR PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Major responsibility for personnel management rests on the chief librarian as reported in 182, or eighty-six per cent, of 212 libraries. Twenty-two libraries report the assistant librarian as head of personnel work, and in the remaining eight libraries various persons, sometimes a senior department head, have major responsibility.

It does not follow that the chief librarian does all of the work. In at least half of the forty-two libraries visited, where the librarian has major responsibility for personnel, his secretary or an executive assistant has gradually taken over many of the details. The amount of discretion exercised by such assistants shows considerable variation, extending, in some instances, to actual selection from among applicants in the sub-professional, clerical, and custodial grades.

Only in Detroit and Washington, D.C., has a full-time personnel officer been established for the centralized handling of personnel problems. In both cases, experience has led the librarians to consider the position so essential that they express amazement at the failure of libraries of comparable size to take the step. To illustrate, the personnel officer in Washington has more than a full-time job with the following duties: preparing and controlling an adequate group of records; planning a recruitment program to attract superior applicants; interviewing all applicants, eliminating inferior ones, and preparing reports on others; aiding in the selection process when vacancies occur; supervising classification studies; conducting follow-ups on probationers; coordinating efficiency rating practice; advising on desirable transfers; organizing and supervising orientation training; preparing general personnel regulations; studying any personnel problem as directed by librarian; and being available for interviews with any staff member on professional or personal matters.

ADVANTAGES OF A FULL-TIME PERSONNEL OFFICER.—There are several advantages of a full-time personnel officer. First is the improvement resulting from the expert advice and experience which a qualified personnel officer could bring to bear on library personnel problems. Classification, recruitment, selection, and evaluation of individuals on the job, all of these require careful and expert attention. In dealing with these problems, a full-time personnel officer can contribute greatly to the library's success.

Second, a full-time personnel officer makes for consistency and continuity in the administration of personnel problems. Conflicting policies and practices can be eliminated, thus avoiding the dangers of confusion and favoritism. Decisions can be based on the best interest of the library as a whole, rather than on the selfish interests of one individual or one department.

Third, a full-time personnel officer can relieve the librarian and his executives of many matters of minor importance. Major responsibility for personnel must rest with the chief, but much of the preliminary work can be handled satisfactorily by an assistant.

The chief argument against providing a full-time personnel officer is the argument of cost. In this connection, progressive business management, much more sensitive to dollars and cents return than libraries can ever be, has found the personnel department invaluable. In a given library, the decision must be made in the light of such questions as the following: "What are the elements of a sound personnel program which we are neglecting or handling inadequately?" "Will a full-time personnel officer more than justify the expense involved?"

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Librarians should delegate routine details and minor decisions in personnel matters so that their time may be saved for major questions. Where substantial progress in this direction has occurred, the overwhelming testimony has been favorable.

2. The routine and control phases of personnel work should be centralized. In the smaller libraries, the proper place may be the librarian's office, while in the large libraries, a full-fledged personnel officer or department may be called for. There are too many instances of scattered personnel records and duties.

3. Libraries with a staff of 150 and over should employ a full-time personnel officer.

PERSONNEL PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

PERSONNEL RECORDS.—Many of the libraries visited have inefficient and incomplete personnel records. In some instances, there is no central file containing even the minimum of information about all staff members. In others, a central file consists of a card index indicating only the name, position, and salary of each member of the staff. Sometimes the scanty

records which are available are kept in longhand, or at least with no uniformity, either as to form or content.

A few libraries use either no application form or makeshift ones. In others, a general form developed for some external purpose, perhaps application for the general city service, is used, even though it is unsatisfactory for the library's purposes. In other instances, the application is buried in the library's general correspondence. Whichever of these situations obtains the potential usefulness of the application form as a significant part of the permanent record of the staff member is not realized.

ADVANTAGES OF COMPLETE PERSONNEL RECORDS.—An up-to-date set of personnel records has many advantages. It makes immediately available basic information about staff members which must otherwise be gathered when needed at the cost of time and effort. Current address and phone number, employment and salary history within the library, and record of illness and leaves meet obvious needs. Furthermore, pre-library experience and training, amount and content of formal education, special skills or interests, professional accomplishments—all are types of information which must be considered in such matters as placement, in-service training, filling of vacancies either by transfer or promotion, and making of special assignments. Encouragement of further specialization to strengthen the library's advisory service is only one illustration of a step which is facilitated by records of this sort.

Adequate personnel records need not be burdensome. As merely one illustration, the Queens Borough Library's Kardex file readily yields the following information: name; current address; telephone number; age; citizenship; marital status; library or other experience prior to appointment, with dates; education with degree or certificate and remarks; record of assignments in Queens Borough Library with remarks; record of promotional examinations; and record of leaves of absence,

resignation and reinstatement, annual service ratings, illness, and salary, all with dates.

RECOMMENDATION.—Every library should maintain an up-to-date set of personnel records for each of its staff members. Once the usefulness of this general record has been recognized, care should be given to the preparation of a regular form which will best meet the library's needs.

CLASSIFICATION PLAN.—A careful position classification plan is considered by personnel experts to be the keystone of a sound personnel program. As defined by the A.L.A. Board on Salaries, Staff, and Tenure in its recent questionnaire, a classification plan "consists of (1) a grouping into classes of positions sufficiently similar as to duties and responsibilities to allow the same qualifications to be demanded of applicants, the same tests of fitness applied, and the same schedule of compensation paid; and (2) written specifications describing each such class in terms of a class title, class definition, typical duties, and minimum compensation." Such a plan if kept up-to-date becomes the basic tool in effective recruitment and selection, preparation of an equitable compensation plan, conduct of an intelligent in-service training program, indeed, in almost every phase of personnel work.

It is encouraging to note the recent interest and accomplishment of public libraries in the development of classification plans. Of forty-two libraries visited, ten have within the last few years prepared classification plans which represent either thorough-going revision of an inadequate scheme, or the library's first effort in the direction of orderly position classification. If the enthusiasm of these librarians for the results could be transmitted to others, no public library would remain without such a plan.

Several other libraries were found which had the rudiments of a classification scheme. In a few cases, this consisted merely of a list of positions. In other cases, the library had designated

two or three grades of positions without any specifications or lists of qualifications, and without any indication of the specialized types of positions within the given grade.

ADVANTAGES OF A CLASSIFICATION SCHEME.¹—The values of a classification scheme are briefly:

1. The elimination of inequities.
2. A strengthening of organization and organizational planning.
3. A clearer understanding of the organization on the part of all concerned.
4. A basic tool for recruitment, promotion, and transfer of personnel.

All of these advantages have been realized at one time or another during recent progress in classification, especially where the plan has been based on a careful job analysis. One librarian declared his detailed job descriptions to be worth a pot of gold, with a practical use in recruiting, in improving organization, in preventing friction through the clarification of duties and authorities, in training and encouraging special studies, and in promotion.

REQUISITES OF A CLASSIFICATION SCHEME.—There are several requisites of a good classification scheme. First, it must be based on a careful job analysis, designed to secure the detailed picture of the duties and responsibilities of each position. A job analysis frequently uncovers many surprises. It is only after duties have been carefully analyzed that the grouping of positions into classes, the determination of proper criteria for selection, and the decision as to an equitable compensation plan can be made most intelligently. The written specifications will then reflect these decisions.

Second, a classification scheme must reflect the advice of experts. Where the library is solely responsible for preparing its own classification plan, the advice of a competent personnel

¹For a more complete discussion see Eleanor Hitt, "Advantages of a classified service in libraries," *Library Journal*, LXI (September 15, 1936), pp. 663-66.

technician or at least a study of recognized procedures will be invaluable. The same is true of consideration of the A.L.A. Classification and Pay Plans with a view to their adaptation to local conditions. Expert advice has been a regular part of recent classification studies in public libraries.

Third, the classification scheme must reflect the experience of the staff. There is much to be gained by soliciting the assistance of a staff committee for careful study of a proposed classification plan. In Baltimore, Seattle, and Knoxville, responsibility for the initial studies and preliminary recommendations was given to a staff group. In other instances, such as Louisville and Yonkers, staff study and consultation occurred at a later stage. In Seattle and Knoxville, members of the library board were designated to participate actively in a joint staff-board committee which studied the classification problem.

Fourth, a sound classification plan should include an equitable compensation program. Several libraries reported that the development of a classification plan has brought about higher salaries. This has been the experience, for example, in Baltimore, Seattle, Louisville, Trenton, and Knoxville. Bringing of salaries up to the minimum requirement for the various classes is the most frequent gain. A classification scheme is a persuasive argument for fairer salaries, whether the case be presented to an independent library board or to the appropriating authorities of the general city government.

RECOMMENDATION.—Every library should have a detailed personnel classification scheme based upon a careful job analysis of library positions. The plan should embrace all positions in the library, showing qualifications for and duties of each, and should be accompanied by a fair and equitable compensation plan.

RECRUITMENT.—Among the forty-two libraries visited, a substantial number depend almost entirely upon their application file for filling vacancies in beginning professional, sub-

professional, and clerical positions. In such cities as Cleveland and Los Angeles, where there are application files representing much talent, this is an important source. However, in smaller cities with limited educational facilities the number of applicants of exceptional qualifications is limited. These libraries suffer for lack of an aggressive recruitment program especially for starting positions.

Several successful channels of recruitment activity have been reported. Washington, D.C., makes a continued effort to find and attract outstanding college students upon their graduation. The promising ones are encouraged to go to library school after a few years of library work. Both Baltimore and Providence advertise their training class with the purpose of attracting outstanding applicants. Regular contacts with library schools are of course widely maintained. Several libraries make a definite attempt to secure professional applicants from several different library schools. This results in an enrichment of the library's staff by securing individuals with a broad variety of training.

RECOMMENDATION.—Libraries should develop a positive recruitment program directed toward the best sources of applicants, local and national.

SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT.—In the overwhelming majority of libraries not governed by a civil service law, new staff members are selected at the discretion of the librarian after evaluation of their application form, correspondence with their references, and, in some instances, a personal interview.

Among the libraries visited, Boston, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Providence, and Springfield have found examinations useful, particularly for appointments at the clerical level and to training classes.

AIDS IN SELECTION.—Since interviews, and much less frequently examination, are the most common selection devices, a word about each is in order.

To utilize the personal interview most effectively, the delegation of preliminary interviewing is often desirable, especially if there is a trained personnel officer. A helpful check on the inaccuracy of personal impressions is the securing of independent evaluations through several different interviews. Where this is done, the practice followed in the Baltimore Library of having uniform report blanks filled out immediately following each interview is of value.

Conference of the interviewers is also useful. The practice of multiple interviewing has the additional advantage of bringing the head of a department or branch in which a vacancy occurs directly into the selection procedure. Ten of the forty-two libraries visited report such practices to be absolutely essential as a morale builder. This seems infinitely preferable to one in which a new assistant is viewed by the department head for the first time when he appears for work.

No entirely satisfactory substitute for the personal interview has been devised for the evaluation of the intangible personality factors that are so important to success in library work. There is, nevertheless, much to be said regarding the value of examinations. Public personnel technicians, after much study and experimentation, have made great strides in the science of testing. In an increasing number of instances, tests of proven validity have been developed in fields formerly thought to be unadaptable to written testing.² Furthermore, written tests are, in many jurisdictions, recognized as supplements to rather than substitutes for the personal interview. By such use, important qualities difficult to judge in a personal interview can be evaluated.

PROBATION.—Of the forty-two libraries visited, ten reported a probationary period of one year, eight a six-months' period, and four, three months. In some of these instances,

²L. D. White, *Introduction to the study of public administration*, rev. ed., (New York: Macmillan, 1939), pp. 317-25.

probation exists only on paper. As one librarian reported, "No one is ever removed at the end of his first year." Others said the probationary period was rarely used.

In six additional libraries, the librarian stated that an informal probationary period was sometimes used, perhaps in individual cases where the librarian thought it desirable, perhaps orally, perhaps for periods of varying lengths, tailored to suit the individual case.

Libraries generally are not making sufficient use of what might properly be an invaluable aid in personnel selection. The length of time chosen for probation is not vital, although the one year recommended in *Organization and personnel procedure*³ would seem to be more serviceable than Miss Herbert's suggestion, three to six months.⁴

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD.—A probationary period has advantages for both the library and the applicant. For the library, it in a sense extends the selection period and provides a clear picture of the competence and qualifications of the candidate on the job. For the applicant, the probationary period presents an opportunity for analysis and correction of any shortcomings, especially if the applicant has careful supervision and guidance.

The chief disadvantage of a probationary period is the assumed unwillingness of applicants from distant communities to accept an appointment which is subject to a probationary period. This disadvantage is undoubtedly real in some cases and may occasionally operate to the library's detriment, although it has not been found in many libraries which have had experience with such a period. Certainly the argument can hardly be justified on logical grounds. Superior candidates will

³A.L.A. Board on Salaries, Staff and Tenure, Subcommittee on Schemes of Service, *Organization and personnel procedure of the ——— Library*, (Chicago: A.L.A., 1940), p. 21.

⁴C. W. Herbert, *Personnel administration in public libraries*. (Chicago: A.L.A., 1939), p. 70.

not be deterred by a system which is part of general library policy and not a hazard individually applied.

REQUISITES FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF PROBATION.—The first requisite of a probationary system is that it must be formally provided for and clearly understood. The scheme has been particularly unsuccessful in libraries where it has been applied haphazardly. Full understanding is essential, both on the part of the candidate and the supervisor.

A second requisite is a follow-up system which insures careful evaluation of the probationer's progress on the job. It is the care with which this second point is observed that will determine perhaps more than anything else whether or not the probationary period will be an effective instrument. The burden here falls chiefly on the probationer's supervisor. It should be his duty during the early period to see whether any shortcomings in the appointee's work can be removed by wise guidance and counsel. An early report and scheduled discussion with the employee, perhaps at the end of three months, is one formal way of seeing that what might go by default if left to informal means is actually done. Reports during the latter half of the probationary period are of course also essential, and perhaps the most workable scheme will be one which requires them at regular intervals throughout.

The libraries which report the probationary period to be of real value are the ones which have installed some such follow-up system as described. In Washington, D.C., the personnel officer interviews each probationer after a report has been received and before permanent appointment is made. More common is a system of written reports and ratings. Some libraries which have not felt a serious need for a general efficiency rating system have installed ratings for the probationary period.

RECOMMENDATION.—A probationary period, as an aid to careful selection of personnel, should be adopted by all public libraries.

TRAINING.—Much enthusiasm over the matter of in-service training is apparent among librarians. Just as the term in-service training itself carries various connotations, the picture of what is actually being carried on or proposed in its name in public libraries is so complicated as to defy description. Interest and ideas abound, however, and if forty-two libraries are any indication, training opportunities in the American public library are on the increase.

First may be examined a more or less distinct type of in-service training—namely, the orientation or induction training of new staff members. The libraries with formal training classes are well known, and their programs have frequently been discussed.⁵ Every library, however, faces the problem of proper orientation of new selectees. This type of early training was most frequently understood when 200 libraries reported on a questionnaire regarding *Person Responsible for In-Service Training*. Thirty-eight listed the librarian; ten, an assistant or associate librarian; thirty-two, the department heads concerned; and twelve, individual staff members, usually senior department heads selected by the librarian for training supervision. Some of these undoubtedly had in mind informal training, which is just as certainly performed in a number of the 108 libraries which reported no training or failed to report on the question at all.

Some libraries without a full-fledged training class have conducted periodic induction programs. In New York, two hours each week for eight weeks is utilized; in Washington, a six-day *junior assistants' institute* was held in 1940. Portland has recently developed plans for a semiannual induction week. A regular course of two hours each day will be directed by the circulation head. Still another plan is illustrated by the Detroit library. There the personnel head spends each new employee's first day with him in going over the entire Detroit system.

⁵C. W. Herbert, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-96, 140.

The widespread practice of depending upon individual department heads for induction training warrants some comment. It is quite natural that individual officers will vary in their opinions as to the importance of such training and the method of its conduct. In such instances, desirable programs, meeting at least minimum standards of effectiveness and uniformity, can be stimulated and overseen by a central personnel officer. In one library, for instance, some department heads have developed procedure manuals which have proved valuable in induction training, while others, with substantially the same problem, have not. Unanimous testimony points to the advantages of carefully framed, written statements which may be given to each new staff member. Whether titled, "Some Things You Should Know About the Providence Public Library," "Do's and Don'ts," as in Sacramento, "General Information for New Staff Members," in Washington, D.C., or "A Handbook for Employees," such written statements serve a useful purpose. Librarians who use them commend them. Others have reported, "We have felt the need and preparation is well under way"; still others have "hoped that this could soon be done."

Attention to in-service training of a more advanced type is less frequently found. Yet there are a number of noteworthy experiments. Two objectives merge here until the line between them becomes at times indistinguishable. The first is that of training a staff member along whatever lines are helpful in improving his performance in the position he now holds; the second is preparing him for promotion to positions of greater authority and responsibility. The term professional growth perhaps indicates the common denominator.

Of the formal library schools, once found as a part of public library activity, most have fallen under the depression and the increase of university library schools. Special and advanced training courses, however, are found in several libraries. Along with its orientation work, the training division

at Chicago has offered advanced courses, of which many staff members have taken advantage.⁶ In Boston, in addition to several preparatory reading courses, twelve full courses (three terms of ten weeks each) and nine one-term courses are offered. Other libraries have given individual courses with marked success. Thus, forty persons were recently enrolled in Mr. Sherman's book selection course in Providence.

Other less formal practices which are directed toward the same objectives are numerous. Many active staff associations have developed sustained programs for the stimulation of professional interest and improvement. Periodic meetings commonly consist of lectures, debates, and panel discussions in the professional field. In Seattle, the formal staff association grew out of a discussion group already started among staff members. In Portland, the staff association has completed plans for an annual three-day institute, for which the program will relate to the professional problems of the Portland Library.

One of the most promising of the less formal training devices is the conference leadership method which is being used more and more in business management. With funds provided under the George-Deen Act, Mr. George Farrington, of the California Department of Education, in 1940 conducted an intensive two-weeks' course at the Los Angeles Public Library. Department heads and first-line supervisors attended in three sections, so that the size of the groups would be manageable. Each member conducted at least one conference on a subject chosen by him. Most effective technique was explained in theory, and practice was constructively criticized. At the end of the course, each of the three groups organized on a permanent basis, with plans for regular conferences. The results have been enthusiastically hailed in the library.⁷ Equally favor-

⁶C. B. Joeckel and L. Carnovsky, *A metropolitan library in action*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 176.

⁷Mrs. M. D. Carter and H. Seymour, "The discussion method for librarians," *Wilson Library Bulletin*, XV (February, 1941), pp. 490-91.

able experience with the conference method has been reported by the Sacramento Library.⁸

Encouragement of specialized training outside the library is of course a fundamental part of the in-service training picture. The exact pattern followed will vary with the facilities available. Leaves for full-time or summer courses at library school are the only solution in some cities, while in others, of which Worcester is merely one illustration, extension or night courses are available. Few libraries have the good fortune of Montclair, where a small fund is available for the payment of tuition of assistants who take specialized courses available in the area. Nevertheless, there is evidence that libraries generally are realizing that generosity in the matter of leaves for advanced training is good economy.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Every library should make careful provision for orientation or induction training of new staff members.

2. Libraries should give careful study to methods of improving the qualifications of staff members and for assisting their professional growth.

PROMOTIONS.—An accurate description of promotional practice in public libraries is difficult. In the majority of the forty-two libraries visited, individual decisions are made by the librarian with board approval. Involved in such decisions are two questions: (1) To what extent are vacancies filled by promotion from within as against drawing upon outside sources? (2) What is the basis upon which actual selection between candidates is made?

Practically all of the libraries visited aim to fill most of their vacancies by promotion from within the organization. There are wide differences, however, in the degree of success

⁸E. M. DeWitt, "Does your staff betray your executive ability?", *California Library Association Bulletin*, II (December, 1940), pp. 127-29.

attained. In several libraries, few of the better positions are filled by promotion, due to the lack of qualified persons on the staff.

Most of the libraries visited recognize the desirability of bringing in new persons with fresh and outside viewpoints, and in only a few was there a serious problem of inbreeding. If the libraries visited are a fair sample, the need is not for importation of staff members from outside the organization, but for measures which will train and develop within the organization persons who can advance to higher positions.

Fortunately, merit is, in most libraries, the avowed basis for promotion. The difficult question here is how to evaluate merit. In the libraries under civil service, promotional examinations frequently are required. This is true, for example, in Los Angeles, Trenton, and Yonkers. St. Louis is the outstanding illustration, both of the voluntary use of promotional examinations and the use of theses for promotions to the highest grade. Boston has also developed promotional examinations for its own purposes, and uses them for positions below chiefs of departments and branch librarians.

Six of the forty-two libraries have made special mention of the value of efficiency ratings in making promotion decisions. This of course presupposes that the ratings are careful and not perfunctory. Ratings, such as in one library where all of a large number of staff members were rated satisfactory, with unsatisfactory being the only other possible rating, are obviously of little significance.

Seniority is almost inevitably taken into account, and, in some libraries, is the major factor in promotions. Where seniority is most highly weighted, the library has suffered in morale and in the quality of service rendered. In one library the seniority policy is so rigid that one day's seniority is the absolute determining factor as between all staff members who have met the paper qualifications for the position. Recently in this library, the necessity of promoting into the director-

ship of an important department a person incapable of discharging the responsibility has given another illustration of the crippling effects of such a practice upon library service. Further corroboration is furnished by several librarians who have recently been appointed to direct libraries long burdened by promotions based upon seniority.

RECOMMENDATION.—All promotions should be made upon the basis of merit, and other factors should be considered only when two candidates of equal merit are found.

SERVICE RATINGS.—Eighteen of forty-two libraries reported the regular use of service ratings. Yearly ratings are most frequent, with a semiannual rating required in some libraries, and monthly ratings used in Oakland. A few additional libraries have begun to use simple rating reports during a probationary period. In several of the libraries where a rating system is in use, serious consideration was being given to its revision and revitalization. Also, in six libraries, interest in the matter had reached the point of definite plans for the installation of a rating system.

REQUISITES FOR THE USE OF SERVICE RATINGS.—The use of service ratings in many libraries has resulted in certain rules which, if observed, make such ratings more effective. First is the necessity for central coordination and direction. The degeneration into something purely perfunctory, which Miss Herbert deplores,⁹ has occurred for lack of central direction in some libraries. The rating period sometimes passes by default. Perhaps the annual rating report consists simply of see last year's report. In other instances, dissatisfaction of the rating officers with the form used or perhaps an unreasonable variation in rating standards has caused the system to struggle along half alive and half dead.

Second is the need for careful education of those who

⁹Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

will be making ratings.¹⁰ Their active participation in the development of the forms used, regular conferences directed toward better understanding and an approach toward uniform standards, and the impartial oversight of a central personnel division are parts of a successful formula. In some libraries, the staff at large, perhaps through a staff association, has been brought into active participation in the development of a rating system. This commends itself as one way of achieving the staff confidence in the equity of the program which is so vital to its success.

Third, ratings should be used to aid the assistant in improving his work and in letting him know that his good qualities are known and appreciated. The Tennessee Valley Authority, with one of the most enlightened personnel policies in the public service, has demonstrated the workability of this approach.¹¹ Frank discussion with each employee at the time of his rating is a regular part of the T.V.A.'s practice. This requires both care in rating and courage on the part of the supervisor, but much is to be gained. Seven libraries were found in which staff members are allowed to see their rating sheets. In some instances, this is only a right and is not mandatory. In Detroit, on the other hand, the employee must see his rating and initial it.

Fourth, ratings should be made by two, and where possible, three superiors. Several independent views will serve to correct distorted ratings due to personal bias or unfounded impressions. If the composite rating is discussed with the employee, peevishness against a single rater may be somewhat minimized. Yet a frank discussion regarding the various phases of

¹⁰Professor L. D. White, for several years U. S. Civil Service Commissioner, has stated: "Experience with formal rating systems indicates definitely that careful supervision of the rating officers is essential even to moderate success." *Introduction to the study of public administration*, rev. ed., (New York: Macmillan, 1939), p. 385.

¹¹T.V.A. Personnel Department. *Group participation in personnel administration in the T.V.A.* (Mimeographed, July, 1937).

the employee's work is possible. The Yonkers library follows this plan. One real difficulty here is that many library staff members are under the close supervision of only one person; and a rating judgment by others tends to be superficial. In the New York Public Library and several others, however, two or three ratings are required. The advantages are such that each library in using a rating system should become resigned to single ratings only as a last resort.

RECOMMENDATION.—All libraries should have a well-planned system of service ratings. Where there is a small staff, all intimately known by the librarian, less formal methods may work, although the regularity of a formal system may insure the achievement of the aims of service ratings.

DISCIPLINE AND REMOVAL.—In public libraries, cases of severe discipline and removal are extremely rare, with more instances found in the custodial services than elsewhere. The experience related by one librarian is not at all unusual. "Since I became librarian, ten years ago, one clerical worker has been asked to resign, but there have been no formal dismissals in either the clerical or professional services." The almost complete absence of dismissals is found in libraries which have independent removal power, just as in those which operate under a civil service system in which removal is uncomfortable and difficult.

Although there were not a great many such instances, a few libraries reported the need for certain dismissals. Such examples represent about the normal number of cases one would expect to find. The significant fact, however, is that nothing is done about them, due to the lack of a sound procedure, fear of the uncomfortable situation likely to result, or a combination of the two.

REQUISITES OF DISMISSAL POLICY AND PRACTICE.—Dismissal policy and practice should have two essential aims: (1) Permanent staff members should be protected from arbitrary or ill-considered removals; (2) there should be no in-

superable obstacles in the way of making removals for incompetency, which the good of the service makes clearly desirable. These two are not always easy to reconcile. In any given library, however, as much of the uncertainty as possible should be removed by a clear statement of the library's removal policy. This should be available for all to examine. *Organization and personnel procedure* provides an excellent model, whether or not the individual library decides to follow the exact procedure there outlined.¹²

Where removal is finally decided upon, the question of allowing staff members a hearing may become a perplexing one. Hearings are a safeguard against arbitrary removals, and in the large majority of public libraries they are required, or will always be allowed if requested. The more difficult question, however, is whether an independent hearing board should be given powers of reinstatement. If this is done, the system may operate to prevent removals which are desirable from the library's standpoint. The librarian may hesitate to risk the unpleasantness unless his case is an ironclad one. Moreover, under such a practice, there is a real question of undermining the authority of the administrative officer.

A workable compromise is that used in the federal civil service, where a dismissal hearing is allowed, but where the action of the reviewing agency is only advisory. The A.L.A. Sub-Committee on Schemes of Service has recommended a hearing "before a representative of the governing body and the administrative officer, together with a representative from among his fellow workers, or from the staff organization to which he belongs."¹³

In the public service, it is frequently required that reasons for removal shall be specified in writing. If the library administration is free to make removals in cases of general incompetency and this is recognized in basic policy, no great

¹²*Organization, etc., op. cit.*, pp. 27, 28.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 27.

difficulties should arise from such a requirement. Service ratings have value here. Also, evidences of the library's serious efforts to aid the staff member in removing his shortcomings are easy to present. If such efforts have been made, written statements should not prove as formidable as some have feared.¹⁴

Early action is an invaluable rule in all discipline matters. Frank discussion in the case of minor infractions may settle problems which might become chronic and serious if not given prompt attention. Once a removal which is clearly desirable has been indefinitely postponed, the difficulty of taking action increases out of all proportion. This fact reenphasizes the value of the probation period. Termination of the services of the probationer is infinitely easier than is later removal after years of permanent service. In the course of this survey, numerous instances were reported by librarians where failure to make an early removal had created an almost intolerable situation; yet no practicable remedy seemed in sight when the employee had completed years of service in the library.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Libraries need to adopt a firmer attitude in cases where dismissals should clearly be made for the good of the service.

2. Dismissal policy and practice should insure permanent employees against arbitrary and unjustified action, and yet should make dismissals possible where fully justified.

Libraries can never be as ruthless in dismissing employees as are private businesses. This is true, in part at least, for all public agencies. With low salaries, long hours, and in many cases cramped quarters, it seems heartless to remove employees who get along but are not efficient or progressive. At the same time, librarians are under an obligation not to waste public

¹⁴Cf. Miss Herbert's statement that "if dismissal becomes necessary, it is better not to put any charge in writing unless required to do so by municipal regulations. . . . It is particularly important not to make formal charges, and especially not to put charges in writing." *Op. cit.*, p. 81.

funds on incompetent assistants. The number of such instances may not be large, but the almost complete absence of dismissals suggests that few librarians have taken action even when convinced that action is highly desirable. If such dismissal situations are firmly handled, the improvement in library administration will more than justify the unpleasantness involved.

RETIREMENT SYSTEMS.—Of the forty-two libraries visited, twenty-eight are enjoying the benefits of a comprehensive retirement plan, and in five others some semblance of a plan is in operation. The remaining nine have no program of retirement at all. Since this sample greatly overrepresents the larger libraries, it would seem certain that the percentage of retirement systems in public libraries generally is much lower.

The libraries which can take advantage of a governmental plan in which the risk is spread, and perhaps the initial cost as well, are most fortunate. Twenty-four of the twenty-eight mentioned above are covered by governmental plans, almost equally divided between state and city.¹⁵

In other instances, libraries have taken independent action, realizing that the advantages to be gained far outweigh the costs. Pittsburgh became a contributing member of the A.L.A. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company retirement annuity plan. Cleveland and Providence have both created contributory plans carried by private insurance companies. Montclair Library, hoping for membership in the Town's scheme, has compulsory retirement at age sixty-five on half pay, and so far it has been carried successfully in the annual budget. Gary, where the use of library funds for retirement is illegal, has recently established a policy of half pay with reduced duties and relief from major responsibilities. This status becomes compulsory at age sixty-five. A bequest to the Portland Library in 1935 has enabled it to pay pensions of forty dollars

¹⁵New York and Ohio provide all of the examples of a state program.

per month for permanent staff members retired at age sixty-five. Other libraries have encouraged individual membership in the A.L.A. plan, on a voluntary, non-contributory basis.

The libraries without adequate retirement programs have unanimously reported their urgent need. Where superannuation is most serious, or is being approached, the quality of library service and staff morale have suffered greatly.

RECOMMENDATION.—Every library should have an actuarially sound retirement system, which provides for compulsory retirement at a given age.

STAFF ORGANIZATIONS.—The number of public library staff associations has grown rapidly in recent years. Thirty-one of forty-two libraries reported active organizations of staff members. Quite a few of this number have been established since the endorsement by the A.L.A. Committee on Salaries, Staff, and Service¹⁰ and the creation of the Staff Organizations Round Table in 1937.

While defying exact classification, the activities of staff associations fall chiefly into four groups:

1. *Social activities*.—Efforts to get staff members better acquainted are widespread. Parties, breakfasts, teas, receptions, and dances are all utilized at times. Flowers at times of illness and letters of condolence are other evidences of friendliness expressed through the staff organization.

2. *Professional activities*.—In the majority of instances, the expression of staff association objectives includes the stimulation of professional interest and growth. But active pursuit of this objective varies as to degree and method. Regular meetings devoted to lectures, book talks, forum discussions, and reports on professional conventions are common. Establishment of a staff library, assignments of study programs, consideration of committee reports, and the organization of

¹⁰*A.L.A. Bulletin*, XXXI (March, 1937), p. 182.

professional *institutes* are also to be found. As to program content, book meetings enjoy wide popularity, with current developments in the library profession and local library problems trailing somewhat behind. A few associations emphasize general and cultural subjects and make a special effort to get speakers on such topics as current affairs, psychology, or the fine arts.

3. *Economic or "protective" activities.*—All staff associations are interested, and some have been active, in seeking better conditions for their members—salaries, hours, working conditions, pensions. Active independent campaigns, such as that of the New York Public Library Staff Association in 1925,¹⁷ have been very rare, however, and action usually consists of presenting a case to the librarian and through him to the board or to the city. Once the library as a whole is united on a program, the staff association may lead the fight at the polls. The Public Relations Committee of the Seattle Staff Association, for example, was largely responsible for the Charter Amendment of 1937 which brought the library within the city retirement system. If thirty-one staff associations are indicative of the total picture, however, vigorous action in economic matters is characteristic of only a small minority of those which exist in the public libraries of the country.

Within their own ranks, staff associations have often established credit unions or loan funds, made gifts to members in need, and taken other action of a welfare nature as needed. In a few instances, health insurance and hospitalization plans have been promoted.

4. *Representative activities.*—Finally, staff associations and their officers have acted as the representative of individual members in a wide variety of matters. At times this means the presentation of employee grievances, suggestions, or ques-

¹⁷Bernard Berelson, "Library unionization," *Library Quarterly*, IX (October, 1939), p. 496.

tions to the administration. Perhaps more often the flow is reversed, and the librarian seeks staff opinion on classification, a proposed rating system, or a procedure manual. The staff association often affords the encouragement assistants need to speak their piece, and provides the channel through which any emerging ideas may be passed on to the chief.

The emphasis of existing staff associations falls variously among the activities described. Professional and representative characteristics predominate, although there are instances of organizations whose activities are almost entirely of a social nature, and in a few others efforts to secure better conditions are primary.

STAFF ASSOCIATIONS AND THE LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION.—How have staff associations affected the library's administration? The testimony of the overwhelming majority of librarians involved is that the associations have been beneficial. Chief accomplishments cited include heightened professional interest and development; strengthening of individual initiative; better morale; and marked assistance to the librarian in obtaining employee opinions, in studying and reaching decisions upon management matters, and in handling burdensome personnel matters.

In a few libraries, the hostility of conservative boards has prevented any organization, and in a few others the administration's attitude, as expressed by one librarian, is "What good could a staff association do? It would only complain about salaries and hours and similar matters." Quite apart from working conditions, the tangible and intangible contributions of active staff associations completely refute these attitudes. Furthermore, as Mr. Mosher has pointed out, where library administrations passively accept almost intolerable conditions, aggressive employee action may be the only available remedy,¹⁸ and it cannot fairly be censured.

¹⁸W. E. Mosher, "Implications of an enlightened personnel policy," *The Library Journal*, LXII (Nov. 15, 1937), pp. 851-52.

A few librarians sadly report a gimme complex among staff groups which at the same time are doing yeoman service in stimulating professional development and assisting in management matters. The annoyance to the administration, however, has, in concrete cases, hastened improvements in personnel standards admittedly low. Perhaps some grumbling is unreasonable. Certainly some is inevitable. Open and organized grumblings, however, are apt to be more healthy (as well as more fruitful) than submerged personal dissatisfactions. The experience of one Western library is revealing. A staff association was formed during the depression years primarily to secure better salary and working conditions. It soon became convinced that the administration was bending every effort in the same direction. The original purpose lost, the organization redirected its efforts along professional, social, and representative lines and has made marked contributions in the ensuing years.

LABOR UNION AFFILIATION OF STAFF ASSOCIATION.—Affiliation of library staff associations with larger organizations of public employees has not been widespread, nor has library soil been fertile for the growth of union activities.¹⁹ In the case of labor union affiliation particularly, the prevailing view in the library profession has been unquestionably one of opposition.²⁰ The affirmative arguments are being more frequently raised, however, and the question seems likely to be debated more openly and searchingly in the future than hitherto.²¹ Two observations may be made:

1. The right of decision belongs properly, both in law and fact, with the library's employees, and preempting the decision, or subtle intimidation on the part of the administration, is indefensible.
2. The decision will inevitably be influenced in any given library by the sincerity and the success of efforts of the library administra-

¹⁹Berelson, *op. cit.*, pp. 477-510.

²⁰"Should librarians unionize?" Yes, 32%. No, 61%. No answer, 7%. Oscar C. Orman, "550 librarians speak," *Wilson Bulletin*, XIV (April, 1940), p. 572.

²¹"Final report of the Third Activities Committee," *A.L.A. Bulletin*, XXXIII (December, 1939), pp. 796-97.

tion to provide satisfactory working standards. It is a dubious answer to the question to say that organized union activity is incompatible with a profession if the economic status of the profession remains indefinitely and hopelessly low.

RECOMMENDATION.—Staff organizations have proved to be useful and beneficial in many libraries and their establishment and growth should be encouraged in all libraries.

INCENTIVES AND MORALE.—Most of the libraries visited in this survey report that the problems of adequate incentives and high morale are of vital importance to personnel management. A few libraries are either not aware of these problems or are doing nothing toward their solution. The great majority, however, are attacking the problems with varying degrees of success. The following summary presents some of the steps that are being taken.

Incentives and morale are closely intertwined. The former emphasizes drives or motivations; the latter embraces the total of employee attitudes, individual and collective, toward the library and the work within it. In libraries, as in the public service generally, modest salaries eliminate the profit motive as a paramount incentive, and others equally powerful must be exploited.²² A real career opportunity, public service in its literal sense, professional interest and pride, recognition and advancement for exceptional merit—these are incentives which libraries can and must foster.

SOME FACTORS IN BUILDING MORALE.—Morale is intangible, but the long first step in its achievement is the adoption of the concrete evidences of a sound personnel program as outlined above. A classification plan, an equitable compensation scheme, the merit principle in selection and promotion, training opportunities, a retirement program—all have direct and significant effect upon morale.

²²See M. E. Dimock, "The potential incentives of public employment," *American Political Science Review*, XXVII (August, 1933), pp. 628-36.

Second, the determination of the administration to study and attack the morale problem is essential. The mechanics are secondary. In one library visited, a new librarian has revitalized her entire organization by devoting her thoughts and energies to this central problem. Board members, staff members, public use of the library—all testify to the success of her efforts.

Third, stimulating leadership is a prime factor. The influence of the chief librarian is obvious. What is less frequently remembered, perhaps, is that the employee's morale is to a large degree determined by his immediate supervisor. Progressive business management, in rediscovering this fact, has insisted upon three things: first, that in selecting a person to fill a supervisory vacancy the qualities most needed in supervision be heavily weighted; second, that supervisors receive systematic training, perhaps by the conference method, in handling personnel matters; and third, that supervisors set good examples in enthusiasm, courtesy, punctuality, and similar matters.²³

Fourth, absolute impartiality in the handling of all personnel matters must not only exist in fact, but staff members must know that it exists. Various studies have indicated that the suspicion of favoritism is a leading depressive of morale. It is a mistake, to use only one illustration, to follow one library's practice of deciding sick leaves as individual cases arise. An air of uncertainty and mystery is the inevitable result. It goes without saying that into carefully formulated rules the spirit of impartiality must be breathed in actual administration.

Fifth, working conditions, with special reference to space, heat, ventilation, noise, interruptions, lighting, and staff quarters, have their direct effect upon morale and work output.

²³W. E. Mosher and J. D. Kingsley, *Public personnel administration*, 2nd ed., (New York: Harpers, 1941), pp. 535-36.

Overcrowding is a serious problem, and a practicable solution is difficult to find in many libraries. However, some have made noticeable improvements in working conditions after thorough study of existing facilities. Relocation of clerical and office work space, more efficient lighting, and space-saving furniture are illustrative. Montclair's program has been noteworthy. Substantial improvements have resulted from the friendly offices of an efficiency engineer, the study of state law governing conditions of work for women in industry, and the annual suggestions of a physician retained for regular inspections. Pleasant rooms reserved for staff use are an essential item in library layout, and libraries which have sacrificed for their achievement count the sacrifice well made.

Sixth, if employee attitudes are to be improved, they must be discovered. It is not enough for an administration to say morale is high, if no careful effort is made to secure the expression of, and to assess, real staff attitudes. A revealing account of experience at the Sacramento library has been reported by Miss DeWitt.²⁴ Like many other libraries, Sacramento was certain that the open door policy and freedom of expression had in fact insured that no significant ideas among the staff remain uncovered. Effective use of the conference method was recently begun, however, and uncovered much of value previously unspoken. In another library, a request for a frank written expression from each staff member brought detailed suggestions from eighty-five, with much food for thought. The thorough discussions which followed, both in staff meetings and with individuals, were an important part of the process. The net result was highly favorable, with the psychological benefits at least as significant as the concrete steps later taken by the library.

Seventh, attention to individuals, to their ideas, their ambitions, their accomplishments, and their problems is an invaluable

²⁴E. M. DeWitt, "Does your staff betray your executive ability?" *Op. cit.*, pp. 127-29.

able part of personnel work all too often neglected. Miss Herbert has said that "the follow-up procedure is ordinarily the weakest point in the library's handling of staff."²⁵ In the larger libraries, this is basically a problem of the immediate supervisor.

Individual staff members need first of all to feel that they are important to the library, that they are encouraged to think about the library's problems, and that their ideas are respectfully considered. Patience in hearing impractical suggestions is the cross of the wise supervisor. In contrast, staff members in one library visited were distinctly indignant that suggestions solicited by the administration were ignored with no explanation.

Official recognition or commendation of outstanding work is used to good advantage in a number of libraries. The vehicle varies—an official bulletin, a library report, citation at a Library Institute, a letter of appreciation. One librarian writes a special letter of encouragement and commendation to every probationer who has been approved for permanent appointment. Interviews at the time of an efficiency rating report offer a regular opportunity for commending strong points as well as for discussing weaknesses.

Handling of grievances is important. Since the accumulation of minor complaints undermines morale, the earlier each case is given attention the better. Each staff member should know to whom his grievances should be taken, and should be equally certain that legitimate complaints will not jeopardize his position.

If all of these ways of maintaining and heightening morale are simply common sense, the cumulative importance of their application in library personnel management is undeniable.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—I. Libraries should give careful attention to the assessment of staff morale.

²⁵Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

2. Continuous effort should be exerted to provide proper incentives for improved service and to strengthen the morale of the staff.

EXTENT OF DEMOCRACY IN LIBRARIES TODAY.—It is tempting to present a picture of the extent of democracy in libraries, one could easily begin by listing the types of formal devices that are found.²⁰ Such a procedure would not take account of the attitude of the administration. For, even in the absence of formal devices, the administrator may be so approachable, so interested in developing and consulting staff members, that the major objective is achieved. Recognizing then, the difficulty of an evaluation, some observations may be presented.

First, the negative side of the picture. In a few libraries staff members are discouraged from making suggestions. This is done either by lack of attention to the suggestions, or by definite indications that suggestions will not be welcomed. In very few libraries are matters settled by the staff as a whole. On the contrary, there are all too many instances where the entire staff is never consulted. In few libraries does the staff have any voice in the preparation of the budget, or in personnel matters.

If the above view is subjective, it is borne out in large measure by the testimony of librarians. Many librarians were asked "in which libraries do you believe there is greatest democracy or staff participation in administration?" In quite a few cases no suggestions could be made. Where individual libraries were mentioned, they were usually the same. Only a few libraries have been regarded as outstanding.

As impressive as the failures, have been the benefits resulting when attempts have been made to give the staff a direct participation in administration. Book selection, con-

²⁰See Chapter IX.

turned over largely to department heads, is at times further decentralized. The opportunity of free expression in written reports is sometimes extended below the department head level. Some librarians facilitate an open door policy by setting aside certain hours when staff visits are particularly encouraged. Again, staff associations are being utilized in a growing number of libraries to secure staff discussions and recommendations on management problems. In these four areas are found perhaps the most common of the regular attempts to encourage staff participation in the library's administration.

Several interesting and less common methods of developing initiative on the part of staff members may be found. In Detroit, once a suggestion is approved, the person responsible is released from certain of his regular duties and given responsibility for developing the program. A position of greater responsibility may be the result of this development of special ability in a particular field.

In the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, a survey of the library was made by a group of younger staff members. Not only were many constructive suggestions obtained, but the interest and enthusiasm of these younger members were greatly enhanced. In Pittsburgh, also, it has been a regular policy for younger assistants in the department to take over certain business meetings each year, principally for the selection of books. The quality of such meetings has not only been sustained, but in addition, enthusiastic interest on the part of the juniors has been stimulated.

For studies in connection with its ten-year program, Seattle developed committees including a staff member, the librarian, and a board member. Other staff members, though not officially on the committee, participated in the work.

Some librarians make an effort to avoid saying *Do this!* or *Do it this way!* They prefer first to have the considered recommendation of the staff member concerned. One of the greatest

attributes of a leader is the ability to make staff members feel that they are responsible for suggestions, even if originally they may be the chief's.

Marked success has been reported in a few libraries where there is a policy of having few secrets. This extends to individual salaries, contacts and activities of the librarian, and meetings of the library board, and a greater feeling of friendliness and comradeship has resulted. Staff members are rarely kept in the dark, and no one person in the library has the inside dope on all of the latest happenings. In contrast are other libraries in which grapevine rumors and suspicions circulate among the staff.

DEVELOPING DEMOCRACY IN LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION.—It should not be necessary to argue the case for wider staff participation in library affairs. Everyone will agree that this is a desirable goal—that benefits to the individual and the profession, as well as to the library itself, are the common result.

Can democracy in library administration be developed? According to Miss Herbert:

It should be relatively easy to develop democracy in libraries since the professional staff at least have the same general objectives, and have been trained to similar practice, theories and ideals. Moreover, there is no conflict between the administrator and the employe as is so often the case in organizations run for profit—where the advantage of one may be the disadvantage of the other.

Moreover, the library grows in influence in proportion to the members of the staff who are recognized by the citizens as authoritative in their respective lines. The reputation of a college is based upon the standing and fame of faculty members rather than upon its president. It is therefore very short-sighted of a library to concentrate its prestige in the chief librarian alone."⁷

In pointing the way to the development of democracy, the examples already cited are pertinent and need not be repeated. Many libraries can apply one or all of these methods, and they

⁷Herbert, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

are recommended for careful consideration. Some general points may be reemphasized.

First, suggestions for change and improvement in the library must be possible without any restriction or fear on the part of staff members.

Second, groups of staff members, and often the staff as a whole, should be employed for the discussion and study of library problems.

Third, opportunities for constructive work should be available for individuals. This is particularly true if the individual is responsible for a good suggestion or idea.

Finally, a determined attempt should be made to bring in the people in less responsible positions. Department heads and first assistants are often consulted in matters of library problems, but the beginning and junior staff members rarely are.

No better conclusion could be selected than the following paragraph:

Apparently there is some justification for the belief that the trend in the internal administration of our libraries is a democratic one, closely paralleling similar trends in other lines of present-day activity, but on the whole, neither so far developed nor so widespread as are these. In view of the foregoing paragraphs is it not pertinent to inquire whether the furthering of that trend, in the interests of efficiency and *esprit de corps*, should not be the active concern of every librarian? We are moving, but are we moving fast enough? In short, is not the change from the present fairly autocratic administration of libraries to a more or less completely active, participating, democratic one an almost inevitable change to which we ought and must look forward, a change which should be aided in every way, and one for which librarians should prepare and be prepared?²⁸

²⁸J. Periam Danton, "Our libraries—the trend toward democracy," *The Library Quarterly*, IV (1934), p. 27.

CHAPTER IX

COORDINATING DEVICES

THIS CHAPTER discusses certain devices directed toward planning and coordination which help to make the administration of the library more effective. Any organization to be truly efficient must have continuous planning and stock-taking to determine what goals are sought and the best means of attaining them, and it must have coordination or teamwork.

Planning and coordination may be quite casual and informal or may be sought through more formal devices. There is a great deal accomplished in libraries by informal methods. When a problem arises, appropriate discussion follows, a decision is reached, and the proper action is taken. This is especially true for smaller libraries where every staff member knows everyone else.

But many libraries find certain regularized or formal devices valuable. Among these are: special provision in the organization for staff work, manuals, meetings and conferences, reports, and committees. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

STAFF SERVICES

Provision for planning and coordination in the library's organization is relatively rare. Among the forty-two libraries visited there are only four examples of staff members whose full-time job is to plan for and coordinate certain phases of the library's services. This type of position is commonly labelled staff service or staff agency.¹ More commonly, some executive or line officer (usually the librarian) is expected to perform the planning and coordinating functions. In the latter

¹A *staff* officer is one whose primary job is thinking, planning, and reporting, in contrast to the *line* officer whose job is to get things done. J. M. Gaus, L. D. White, and M. E. Dimock, *The frontiers of public administration*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), p. 71.

instances, these functions are too often crowded out by other duties.

At Enoch Pratt Library, the Director of Reference Work, appointed on April 8, 1936, included in her duties the supervision and encouragement of reference materials and services in the twenty-six branches. After a year or two, when a survey of branch book collections was made preparatory to spending a gift of \$25,000 for book stock, it was realized that adult reference work is dependent at branches, even more than at central, upon the whole adult non-fiction collection, and its effective knowledge and use by the entire branch staffs. In September, 1940, the position was reorganized as Coordinator of Adult Branch Book Service, the duties including: (1) Supervision of book selection, aided by committees on (a) books, (b) pamphlets and documents, and weekly discussion meetings; (2) assuring counsel by central subject department heads as to titles and subjects when worth-while; (3) half-time in visiting all branches and supervising the daily service to adult readers, reporting suggestions to central departments, including order and catalog; (4) supervising with head of reference department, the work of the branch reference assistant, at central, who receives each morning the special reference and subject request slips from all branches, and assures that the knowledge and latest materials of the central organization may be most promptly and competently used. Every branch librarian and assistant comes to central once a week to see new material and participate in discussing it, both in meetings and with the subject specialists.

The District of Columbia Public Library has the position of Coordinator of Adult Service. The chief functions of this office are: to provide liaison service between branches and the central library, to aid in the development of reference collections and reference service throughout the system, to coordinate book selection especially in the branches, and to supervise bibliographical undertakings. As in Baltimore, the position is

a means of taking a broad look at the library's adult services and making plans to strengthen those services.

The Cleveland Public Library had two positions of Assistant to the Librarian. One of these became, in effect, a personnel officer for the system. The other has been a planning and correlating service in charge of adult education.² As originally planned, this latter position was charged with studying the library's opportunities in adult education, and recommending constructive action. While certain modifications have arisen, this seems a true example of a planning and coordinating service.

In several libraries, the person in charge of children's work is, in effect, a staff officer, though perhaps not actually designated as such. This situation is usually found where the children's assistants in branches are directly responsible to the branch librarian. In such cases, the head of children's work usually acts in an advisory capacity to coordinate children's work throughout the system.³

As a direct result of the Joeckel-Carnovsky survey, the Chicago Public Library created two positions of Assistant to the Librarian. Both of these were to be planning and coordinating positions, one for bibliographic projects and one for adult service. The latter has led to the organization and development of the library's new experimental branch.

The term staff services may properly be applied to all of the above positions. They are not supervisory positions, and department heads and branch librarians are not directly responsible to them. Their job is planning, studying, advising, and reporting. It would only be natural for them to exert considerable influence over the line officers, but this influence is more or less indirect.

²L. Carnovsky and others, *An appraisal of the Cleveland Public Library*, (Chicago, 1939) (Mimeographed), p. 6.

³See Mary R. Lucas, *The organization and administration of library service to children*, (Chicago: A.L.A., 1941).

The chief values of staff agencies are twofold. First, they enable the library to provide experts in a given field to plan and coordinate all of the activities in that and closely related fields. Second, by giving such persons no regular line duties, they provide a clear and unobstructed opportunity for studying, planning and reporting.

STAFF SERVICES THROUGH LINE OFFICERS.—Many libraries, while making no formal provision for staff agencies, expect their line officers to perform these functions. Where this is the case, the librarian himself is usually the person who expects to do the job.

It is impossible to estimate the number of cases where the librarian actually performs staff functions. Among the forty-two libraries visited, there are a few notable examples where the librarian has delegated much administrative responsibility and is giving a sizable portion of his time to planning and coordination. These examples, however, are very clearly the exception. In the great majority of cases, the librarian has little time to do more than keep his desk clear of regular administrative matters.

Ideally, every librarian should have time for planning and coordination, whether or not he has staff assistance. As Miss Herbert has said:

One of the greatest needs of librarians is the opportunity in official time to do some sustained and constructive thinking, . . .⁴

The librarian is the only person with the authority to initiate policies affecting the entire organization. And as the officer on whom rests major responsibility for success or failure, the librarian must have the final decision. If such decisions are not to be based largely on chance or hunch, they must have the best study and thought of the librarian as well as that of his staff. The evidence in Chapter IV indicates that in most libraries such is not the case at present.

⁴C. W. Herbert, *Personnel administration in public libraries*, (Chicago: A.L.A., 1939), p. 92.

The ideal solution is not a question of *either* the librarian, *or* a staff agency, but *both . . . and*. The staff officer not only should not relieve the librarian of the necessity of study, but should make it both more necessary and more productive. A good staff officer will give the librarian more problems for study and at the same time will have prepared the way for more effective study by preliminary exploration and analysis.

One may well raise the question, Is not planning a function of every staff member? The answer would, of course, be yes. Every person in the organization should be engaged in continuous study and planning, at least as far as his own work is concerned. But while the department head can and should plan for his department, someone is needed who can plan for all departments. Again, while planning and coordination may be recognized as a part of the line officer's job, there is grave danger that regular duties will occupy all of his time. If the line officer actually is devoting time to study and analysis, well and good, but if he is not, he should either be relieved of some administrative duties, or someone else should be expected to do the planning and study.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Every large library should have at least one staff officer, and some libraries may need more than one.

2. While some medium-sized libraries probably cannot afford a full-time staff officer, they may well have part-time persons. If this is done two requirements should be met:

(a) Adequate time must be given for study and analysis, and this should be clearly recognized in the assignment of duties. That is to say, other duties should not be allowed to encroach upon or crowd out the staff functions.

(b) The staff duties should be combined with other duties which are at least not completely unrelated. As one suggestion, public relations may afford a workable combination (see p. 141).

3. For the small library (staff less than twenty-five), no formal setup may be needed. The librarian alone can be the staff officer and must depend upon various staff members for preliminary study and advice.

STAFF MANUALS

Staff manuals in the library may be compared roughly to engineers' drawings, and blueprints in the factory. They provide a description of the library's organization, and frequently describe the steps to be taken in the library's processes or operations.

... if carefully made (they) might present a picture of an organization in action, serve as a source for details of policies and procedures, offer a compact interpretation of the functions of the organization to employees scattered in various departments, and promote uniform understanding and practice in the organization.⁵

TYPES OF STAFF MANUALS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—With variations in detail, three types of staff manuals have been found in public libraries. While all of these may not properly be labelled staff manuals, they are often so considered by librarians and so reported. The types found are:

1. *Personnel rules*, such as policies regarding sick leave, working hours, vacations, and staff classification.

2. *Procedure books*, containing circulation rules and procedures, cataloging routines, procedures in sending books to be rebound, and similar descriptions of library operations.

3. *General manuals*, including all or at least most of the above types, but in addition giving some general information about the library and its organization.⁶

⁵L. R. Wilson and M. F. Tauber, "Staff manuals in college and university libraries," *College and Research Libraries*, II (March, 1941), p. 126.

⁶In a recent thesis, Mr. Paul Howard discusses the various types of staff manuals from the standpoint of their contribution to a theory of library management. The above classification is essentially the same as Mr. Howard's except that he divides *procedure books* into *staff instruction books* and *department manuals*. Paul Howard, "Library staff manuals and a theory of library management," (Typewritten M.A. paper), (Chicago: Graduate Library School, 1939), p. 45.

TABLE 29
STAFF MANUALS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Types of Manual	Group I 37 Libraries	Group II 87 Libraries	Group III 68 Libraries	Group IV 11 Libraries	Group V 11 Libraries	Group VI 10 Libraries	Total 224 Libraries
Personnel rules.....	1	20	9	1	3	4	38
Procedure books.....	8	15	18	2	1	3	47
General manuals.....	5	10	21	4	4	1	45
Total manuals.....	14	45	48	7	8	8	130
No manual.....	23	42	20	4	3	2	94

Table 29 gives a summary of the various types of manuals found in public libraries.

While some of these manuals consist of brief statements of procedure and are not entitled to the term staff manuals, the majority represent constructive attempts to codify and reduce to writing certain of the library's practices and policies. It should be pointed out that of the ninety-four libraries without manuals, thirty-two reported that manuals were in preparation.

Table 29 shows that staff manuals are found most frequently in the larger libraries. This is even more apparent if it be noted that many of the libraries in Groups IV, V, and VI (staff of seventy-five and over), although reporting no general manual, indicated that certain departments had either type-written copies or card files of their detailed procedures. Furthermore, in Groups IV, V, and VI, there are only three libraries in which staff manuals are neither in use nor in preparation.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF STAFF MANUALS.—L. R. Wilson and M. F. Tauber give three reasons for the non-existence of staff manuals in college and university libraries:

1. Lack of faith in the value of the staff manual,
2. The use of substitute methods, and
3. The lack of time and funds for preparation.¹

These same arguments are found in the public libraries which do not have manuals, although most comments emphasize the time and expense factor. A few librarians do not want manuals because they believe that staff members' initiative and imagination would be deadened, and a few are dubious about the benefits that would result. The majority, however, are concerned chiefly with the initial cost in time and money, and the difficulty of keeping manuals up-to-date.

¹Wilson and Tauber, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

The problem of keeping a manual up-to-date has been solved in several libraries. The manual is kept in loose leaf form, and some procedure is established to see that all departments keep a record of their changes or revisions. Such changes are then sent in at regular intervals, edited by some designated person or committee, and a revised or additional page is added to all copies of the manual. Through some such means the manual can be kept up-to-date with a minimum of trouble and expense.

There is no disputing the fact that the initial cost of a manual is considerable. The only answer to this is to point to the benefits gained. If these do not more than offset the cost, no manual is justifiable. But it is significant that in this investigation no library was found which developed a staff manual and then felt that it cost more than it was worth. The argument that the cost is too great came almost invariably from libraries which have never had a manual.

Briefly the benefits gained from the use of staff manuals are:

1. They are an efficient method of orienting and instructing new staff members.
2. They give all staff members a working knowledge of other library departments and services.
3. They minimize the possibility of different decisions in different instances for the matters they treat.
4. They may provide an excellent opportunity for studying and improving the library's routines and operations.

IMPROVING STAFF MANUALS.—Among the libraries studied, certain useful suggestions were encountered which may be of general value.⁸

1. A staff manual is more valuable if it includes information on personnel problems and rules.
2. Procedures and routines should be explicit and illustrated with sufficient examples so that new staff members will have no difficulty in continuing the established methods.

⁸See also Paul Howard, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-100.

3. To be most useful the manual should be in sufficient detail, so that members of one department may use it for all questions of procedures and methods in other departments.
4. A committee is probably the best agency to edit the manual and keep it up to date.

OTHER TYPES OF WRITTEN DEVICES.—Several other written devices have been found useful in libraries. Organization charts have been found helpful in both large and small libraries. In connection with this study, organization charts were prepared and submitted to several librarians. This often produced favorable comments, especially for the libraries which had no chart previously.

A few librarians have established house organs, or regularly distributed sheets to discuss or interpret library policies. In several instances, this has been a means of avoiding or minimizing rumors and unofficial grapevine.

Bulletin boards are sometimes used to post an official announcement of a decision or a new policy.

Memoranda are often used to describe revisions in organization or procedures.⁹ One librarian almost always insists upon written recommendations from the staff and writes down her own decisions. No decision is recognized as official unless it is in writing.

Several libraries keep up-to-date books of their forms, such as cards, letters, and notices. These, if readily available, aid the staff members who use them frequently.

One library is building up a card file of suggestions as how to handle various situations, whom to phone, to which staff member given requests should be referred and similar matters. It is hoped to distribute this in typewritten or mimeographed form carefully indexed.

Enoch Pratt Free Library has a statistical manual showing how its various figures of library use are prepared and summarized.

⁹The recent reorganization of the Library of Congress was instituted and developed with an excellent series of memoranda issued by the Librarian's office.

Several libraries have leaflets of instructions to new employees. Typical examples include general orientation leaflets for all staff, guides for pages, and directions for student assistants.

One library has a comprehensive indexed folder of miscellaneous information which is at times needed on short notice. Some of the items included are board by-laws, city ordinances of special interest to the library, list of materials given new staff members, index to location of library blueprints, and truck delivery schedule.

Another library is preparing a book of policies which will set forth the policies of the librarian and board for use of those officials. Every time a decision is made affecting library policies it will be entered and indexed. At any given time, the librarian or board can answer all questions regarding policy decisions that have been made in the past.

All of the above devices are means of codifying and summarizing certain phases of the library's management. They are coordination devices in the sense that they aid in unifying the organization, eliminating needless duplication and repetition, and providing for consistent action by all concerned.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—I. Every library should have a staff manual. In the smaller libraries one general manual may suffice, but in the larger libraries, individual departmental manuals may be needed.

2. The staff manual should give a picture of the objectives of the library, its organization, major policies, rules governing the staff, and departmental procedures.

STAFF MEETINGS

Staff meetings provide an opportunity for study and discussion of common problems. They make it possible for all staff members to be informed of new developments and new policies at the time they are begun. While they are useful in an-

nouncing changes their greatest value lies in giving the opportunity for joint thought and discussion. Staff meetings contribute to planning and coordination, and aid in in-service training, in building up morale, and in stimulating enthusiasm.

FREQUENCY OF STAFF MEETINGS IN LIBRARIES.—Not all staff meetings can be formally classified, but three more or less distinct types have been found; meetings of the entire staff, meetings of department heads (usually including branch librarians), and intradepartment meetings (that is, the reference staff, or branch librarians, or children's department staff). In addition to more or less formal meetings of these types, there are numerous informal gatherings or conferences which are called as the need arises. These may be extremely valuable, but, because they are rarely regular meetings, it is difficult to give evidence as to their frequency or their accomplishments.

Table 30 gives the number of staff meetings reported by the libraries studied. Meetings of the entire staff are held in approximately seventy-eight per cent of the libraries reporting. Both the largest libraries and the smallest libraries depend less on general staff meetings than do the middle groups. In the small libraries, staff meetings are perhaps less necessary, and in the large library, it is difficult to find a time and place for all the staff to gather.

Department head meetings and intradepartment meetings are found in less than half of the libraries. Size of the library is one important factor here, for both these types of meetings are found in a greater proportion of the large libraries.

The frequency with which meetings are held varies widely. Here again, the size of the library is an important factor, as well as the type of meeting held, but several observations are possible from the data gathered:

1. Monthly meetings of the entire staff are most common in small and medium-sized libraries.
2. Meetings of department heads are about equally divided between weekly, monthly, and irregularly as needed.

3. There seems to be no general pattern for intradepartment meetings.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED AT STAFF MEETINGS.—An attempt was made to ascertain the subjects discussed at staff meetings. The results, however, are not entirely representative, due to the large number of libraries which either reported no subjects, or such broad topics as library business and current problems. No significant differences were found in the subjects discussed in small libraries as between those discussed in large libraries. Following is a list of the more important subjects, listed in order of frequency:

1. Administrative problems and rules, including procedures in individual departments.
2. Book reviews and the selection of new books.
3. Library literature and professional news.
4. Personnel rules and principles and general staff problems.
5. Addresses by the chief librarians, reports of conventions, and special reports of staff members.
6. General library policies.
7. Outside speakers.
8. Civic affairs, the library and the community.
9. Interdepartmental problems.
10. Board action.

Several interesting variations of the above general topics were found:

1. One library reported marked success with book discussion meetings developed around a central theme (for example, democracy, youth problems) instead of isolated book reviews.

2. Some libraries discussed procedures and developments in other libraries as a prelude to consideration of their own. This was especially fruitful where one or more members had visited the other library.

3. One library reported success with an interpretative summary of board discussion and action in place of reading a list of topics discussed or the minutes of the board meeting.

4. Considerable success was reported with clinics or skits in contrast to prepared reports or talks.

In the libraries studied, staff meetings have two main purposes: (1) to review, discuss, and solve problems of common interest; and (2) to inspire and enthuse the staff. The former is the more frequent objective. Primarily, staff meetings are coordinating devices, secondarily, means of in-service training or of inspiration.

VARIATIONS IN TYPES OF STAFF MEETINGS.—Several unusual developments or modifications of the usual type of staff meetings were found. These may be reported briefly.

Several libraries conduct what is called a staff institute, lasting either a full day or a large part of a day. In addition to a special topic and a more or less formal program, there may be consideration of various business matters, recognition of special achievement, and some attempt to inspire and enthuse the staff.

One library, after years of staff meetings in which only a few were vocal, has instituted separate meetings for department heads, librarians of large branches, and librarians of small branches. Better discussion and wider participation have resulted. After the ice is well broken, it is hoped to recombine the meetings.

In two of the libraries visited, periodic meetings of junior assistants are held, sometimes without the librarian's presence. These meetings consider not only professional problems but certain items of library business.

In a few libraries, a representative committee is chosen by the staff. This committee plans the topic and conducts the year's staff meetings. Sometimes the librarian is allotted a portion of each meeting or a certain number of the meetings.

In a few libraries, meetings of the staff association are the only staff meetings. In such cases, the staff association may work with the librarian in planning meetings, or may allow the librarian the opportunity to present any matters he wishes.

CRITICISMS OF STAFF MEETINGS.—Few librarians question the inherent value of staff meetings, but many report certain

practical difficulties. One criticism of staff meetings is that they tend to encourage bickering and personal antagonisms. "A great deal of argument results, and little in the way of constructive action is accomplished." Several libraries were visited in which staff meetings were disorganized and resulted in a mild form of bedlam. For such reasons some staff meetings have been discontinued.

In the libraries which appear to have solved this problem, three general rules are commonly found:

1. No person speaks without first having been recognized by the chairman. In this way only one person talks at one time.
2. Discussion is directed at the presiding officer and not at other participants. Thus, when some member does not approve of a suggestion or statement, the suggestion itself is discussed, and not the person making it. There is a difference between saying this idea will not work, and your idea will not work.
3. Positive attempts are made to see that everyone contributes to the discussion. Thus, meetings do not become debates between the most vocal staff members.

Among the critical comments are occasional complaints that staff meetings are held too frequently, and tend to become boring and uninteresting. In a few libraries, it was felt that staff meetings were not held often enough.

Staff meetings can be held too often, at least if the matters regularly brought before the staff are dull. One can well understand the lack of interest that is produced by the reading of the lists of new books selected by each department head, in place of a lively discussion of a given topic and the latest books related to it. Too many individual and unrelated book reviews may result in too frequent meetings and rather dull ones.

IMPROVING STAFF MEETINGS.—The most important step in improving staff meetings is to plan carefully the matters to be discussed. This should be done with a view to some definite accomplishment and everything should be directed toward this

goal. A carefully planned agenda, whether written or not, is a distinct aid.

Second, the conduct of the meeting is important, and a strong chairman can do much to keep the discussion relevant, close out points when further discussion is useless, and keep the idea of accomplishing something always in mind. Libraries could well give thought not only to utilizing their best talent but also to training persons to be good chairmen.

The responsibility for success of meetings does not rest solely upon the librarian. Whether in a staff meeting in a given library, or a professional convention, those attending profit in direct proportion to their contribution. Furthermore, various members of the staff can be used to good advantage both in the planning and conduct of staff meetings. One of the best planned programs for staff meetings was found where joint responsibility was shared by a staff committee and the librarian.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—Regular staff meetings should be held in all libraries. In the small library, they need not be extremely formal, and in the large library, they may of necessity have to be infrequent. In a given library, the final policy must be determined in the light of local problems, but several general rules may be suggested:

1. Meetings of the entire staff should be held monthly, or at least quarterly. (The summer months are commonly excepted.)
2. Meetings of department heads are desirable at least twice a month and preferably every week.
3. Intradepartmental meetings should be held regularly where needed (perhaps monthly), and if not needed regularly, could be held with profit two or three times a year.

STAFF REPORTS

The written report is one of the best methods of informing the administrator regarding the latest happenings in the li-

brary and the problems encountered. Periodic reports of progress are means of control and supervision, in that they provide the information from which the proper steps to coordinate service may be determined.

EXTENT OF WRITTEN REPORTS IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES.—The majority of libraries require some form of written reports from most persons in positions of authority. This is demonstrated by Table 31.

It is clear that reports are far more frequent in large libraries than in the smaller ones; only one library with staff of seventy-five or more indicated that no written reports were required.

Libraries tend either to have monthly or annual reports—157 require monthly reports and 122 require annual ones.¹⁰ Reports are narrative in 182 instances in contrast to 97 in which figures only are reported. In most cases, it is believed that reports giving only figures of use fall short of supplying the librarian with needed information about the operations of a given unit.

A summary of the persons from whom written reports are required provides a fairly uniform pattern.

115 libraries require reports from department heads,

75 libraries require reports from branch librarians (if there is a branch supervisor these reports are frequently made to that individual),

25 libraries require reports from children's librarians.

In addition, sixty-four other persons are mentioned. This is largely due to the fact that in the smaller libraries assistants in charge, although required to make reports, are not classed as department heads. Reports of circulation, cataloging, and reference, often centralized by one person, also account for some of these others.

¹⁰Some libraries have several series of reports, e.g., one for department heads, one for branch librarians, and one for children's librarians. Hence, these figures are larger than the number of libraries involved.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF REGULAR REPORTS.—

Three disadvantages of written reports are commonly cited:

1. They require too much time for the librarian to read.
2. They require too much time for writing on the part of busy department heads.
3. They tend to have too much repetition and duplication.

If it is true that the reading of reports requires too much of the librarian's time, one or both of two things may be wrong. The librarian is trying to supervise too many people directly, or insufficient attention has been given to developing the type of reports that would be most useful and worth the time spent.

The writing of reports not only does take time but should take time if carefully done. If it is too much of a burden, the reports may be more frequent than needed. A few libraries have at least partially remedied this fault by drawing up regular forms or topics to be presented. The aim is not to stereotype reports, but to provide a regular outline of points to be covered.

While some repetition in reports is desirable, too much is harmful. This can be minimized at least by careful instruction of those making reports. Duplication can be pointed out and thus avoided in future reports.

There are several advantages to written reports. They are of obvious value to the librarian in preparing his annual report. Furthermore, if reports are preserved individually they provide a valuable source of historical material about the library.

Second, reports often provide valuable material to present to the library board. Several librarians report greater board interest in problems culled from departmental reports. In addition, valuable information is afforded to back up the librarian's recommendations or requests.

Third, written reports are useful as internal management devices. For the staff member they provide both the necessity

and the opportunity for reviewing his program and evaluating the worth of his unit. For the librarian the written report gives in summary form a report of the progress of his institution. Variations and changes are regularly brought to his attention, and he has an excellent opportunity to see just what is being accomplished and the means that are used.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.—General conclusions regarding the desirable frequency of reports to the chief librarian are difficult. Annual reports seem too infrequent to satisfy the need, and some librarians believe that monthly reports are too frequent. It may be suggested that monthly reports should be thoroughly tried and if too much repetition is encountered, bi-monthly or quarterly reports may be substituted. One library has the interesting policy of having reports from two of its branches every month, each branch reporting four times a year.

Some success has been reported in libraries where reports are neither stereotyped nor too rambling. For most units the narrative report is best, and a valuable aid may be an outline of topics or points to be discussed. This does not limit the staff member too closely and, at the same time, gives the librarian regular information on certain important points.

Each library must determine for itself the persons from whom reports are to be required. Department heads and branch librarians would seem to constitute a minimum list. In addition, regular reports are desirable from every staff member in charge of a given unit or service—publicity and purchasing are obvious examples.

Several libraries report success with reports from staff members who have attended conferences and meetings, or who have visited other libraries. Special emphasis is placed on ideas applicable to the given library or the given staff members' work.

One librarian requires an annual list of recommendations from department heads and branch librarians. This serves both to keep the librarian informed and to promote study on the

part of the staff member. One may well wonder if valuable results would not be obtained by asking for such a list from every staff member.

Special reports are used to advantage in many libraries. They afford not only the opportunities of selecting the subjects of greatest importance, but also of selecting the best person on the staff to make each report.

ORAL REPORTS.—A few libraries report the use of regular oral reports. To illustrate, one librarian reserves one morning a week in which branch librarians are urged to come and talk over their problems. Another librarian sets aside regular hours for conferences with department heads, each of which is expected to come in regularly. There are a great many other instances in which librarians and their department heads make it a practice to have frequent talks. In most of these cases, an open door policy seems to be preferred to a system of regular conferences. The value of setting regular intervals, however, is in permitting a general report and review of problems, in contrast to a meeting designed to decide a certain point or settle a pressing matter. Also it should be emphasized that regular oral reports and an open door policy are entirely compatible. The existence of the former need in no way weaken the latter, as experience in several libraries clearly demonstrates.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Annual reports should be required of every staff member in charge of a unit or area of the library's activities.

2. Monthly reports should be required of department heads and branch librarians in organizations where it is difficult for the chief to maintain close touch with the units. Experience should determine whether monthly reports are more frequent than necessary.

3. Reports, while covering regular topics, should not be stereotyped. They should be narrative, but can well include figures of use, service, etc.

TABLE 32
STAFF COMMITTEES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

	Number of Libraries Reporting						
	Group I 46 Libraries	Group II 89 Libraries	Group III 71 Libraries	Group IV 12 Libraries	Group V 14 Libraries	Group VI 12 Libraries	Total 244 Libraries
Committees.....	1	21	38	7	8	6	81
No committees.....	9	29	9	1	..	1	49
Not reported.....	36	39	24	4	6	5	114

TABLE 33
TYPES OF STAFF COMMITTEES

Name of Committee	Number of Libraries
Social committees.....	19
Gifts and flowers.....	13
Program for staff association or staff meetings.....	9
Staff room.....	8
Staff welfare and working conditions.....	7
Book committee.....	5
Staff library and professional books.....	4
Rules and manuals.....	4
Insurance and loans.....	4
Publicity.....	3
Pensions.....	2
Exhibits.....	2
Staff news.....	2
Personnel.....	2
Work with young people.....	2
Radio.....	2
Others: Finance, code of ethics, fines, new building, complaints, pamphlets, use of library, lectures, music.....	1 each
General.....	6
Various temporary committees.....	19

4. Libraries should give careful study to improving the quality of reports. Poor reports month after month from the same person might be avoided by some good training, perhaps by the librarian, perhaps by the best expert on the staff, perhaps by pointing out excellent features of the better reports, perhaps by competition and training combined.

STAFF COMMITTEES

Staff committees are one means of bringing greater democracy into the administration of the library and giving staff members a keener interest in library activities (see p. 201). They are in addition, a valuable coordination device in that they bring together staff members from many departments for the discussion of library problems.

USE OF STAFF COMMITTEES IN LIBRARIES.—Table 32 gives a picture of the number of libraries making regular use of

staff committees. For the libraries reporting, the ratio is approximately two libraries with committees to one without. For the small libraries, not reported apparently means that no committees were used, for each library was asked to list organized staff committees.

The value of staff committees depends largely upon the matters which they are expected to study and discuss. Table 33 gives a list of the various types of committees together with their frequency. It is apparent that most organized committees in libraries are concerned with staff welfare problems—social, physical, professional, and financial. There is only a sprinkling of committees dealing with other library problems such as publicity, work with young people, and rules and manuals.

The evidence indicates that the staff committees dealing with library problems are special or temporary committees in the main. Thus any one year's report would fail to give a complete picture. Several libraries which actually listed no staff committees reported that a new policy or new service is rarely inaugurated without previous study on the part of a committee.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF COMMITTEES.—Several disadvantages of the use of committees were reported:

1. They are time-consuming for the members.
2. They tend to stifle or limit the interest of other staff members in the problems concerned.
3. The committee may tend to take over the management of certain functions, a task to which it is not well adapted.

On the other hand, definite benefits from committee use have been reported:

1. Committees give the staff member a chance to have a share in broader problems, thus promoting wider participation in library decisions.
2. They bring varying viewpoints to bear on the study of a given problem.

3. They provide an excellent device for utilizing the best talents and abilities of the staff members.
4. They help to diffuse throughout the organization a broader understanding and appreciation of certain library problems.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.—How should committees be chosen? In the libraries studied, appointment by the librarian is reported in sixty-three cases, appointment by officers of the staff association in thirty-two cases, and election by the staff or the staff association in thirteen cases.

For committees to study given library problems, it is probably best to depend on appointment by the librarian, with recommendations from department heads and staff members. For committees dealing with staff welfare and personnel problems, election by the staff is probably better. Staff association committees are, of course, chosen by the methods specified in the constitution of the association.

Library time should certainly be given for committees meeting to study library problems. For social and entertainment committees, the problem is a difficult one, but, in general, librarians seem to favor a rather liberal policy in granting library time. A final decision can be reached only after consideration of the benefits to the staff members and to the library's service, as well as the amount of time involved.

Most librarians have found that committees are useful for discussion and study, but not as management devices. This corresponds with the prevailing theory of specialists in administration. A committee is an excellent device to study, plan, and report, but if management duties are involved they should be turned over to one responsible officer.

A few libraries tend to use certain staff members over and over again for committee service. Every library has certain people who are good committee members, and it is a temptation to overwork them, and neglect other staff members. This was the case in one library when the librarian decided to do something about it. Other staff members, particularly

juniors, were brought in, and soon were able to hold their ground with the regulars. Some lost motion resulted at first, but on the whole the benefits greatly outweighed the disadvantages.

RECOMMENDATIONS.—1. Staff committees are a useful administrative device and should be widely employed especially in the larger libraries.

2. Committees should be used more widely for the study of library problems as contrasted with social problems. They should be especially helpful in discussing problems which cut across departmental lines, such as adult education, public relations, and young people's work.

3. Careful study should be given to the selection of matters to be turned over to committees with a view to giving them some real purpose and hope of real accomplishment.

OTHER COORDINATION DEVICES

REVIEW OF CORRESPONDENCE.—

The life of the department and its subdivisions is reflected in its correspondence. Great care is therefore taken in well-managed organizations to review drafts of correspondence."

While the library depends less upon correspondence for its services than some other organizations, several librarians report that they review all outside correspondence. The purpose of this is not to check up on the employee but to see that a consistent and uniform policy is followed. If such a general procedure is established, the sound procedure would be to thrash out in conference the types of matters worthy of review, and then leave to the individual staff member the decision as to whether a given letter is properly included.

VISITS.—The value of visits to the library's units and direct observation of their work is obvious. Several librarians make a regular practice (in two cases daily) of visiting each of the

"L. D. White, *Introduction to the study of public administration*, rev. ed., (New York: Macmillan, 1939), p. 105.

library's departments. This includes branches, although because of distances involved visits to branches may be less frequent. One library has an interesting practice of encouraging informal visits by department heads to other departments and particularly to the library's branches. This has helped in breaking down aloofness, promoting better understanding, and bringing the knowledge of different specialists to bear upon branch problems. The department heads avoid the appearance of telling the branch librarians what to do, but may make suggestions directly and tactfully.

STANDARDS AND THE MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS.—

The importance of standards and measurements pervades every administrative problem, but they are of especial significance to executive control and coordination. It is said that the chief administrative officer should be able to hold his subordinates responsible for performance. But performance of what? Performance of their duties, of course. But what are their duties and what is a reasonable gauge of achievement? If the chief administrative officer knows what constitutes such standards in every principal activity, and if he receives constant reports on administrative results so measured, the problems of executive control would be materially lessened.¹¹

Few libraries have set up standards for their departments and made a serious attempt to judge the attainment of these standards. Where any such attempts have been made, the standards exist chiefly in the mind of the librarian or executive officer.

It has been pointed out repeatedly that much of library service cannot be adequately judged on the basis of numerical results. And yet many administrators might well give more attention to determining what they expect (even if this is somewhat subjective), and how well it is being realized. This is too important to be done only occasionally, informally, and somewhat haphazardly.

Periodic surveys, both of the library as a whole and of individual services or departments, are valuable coordination

¹¹John M. Pfiffner, *Public administration*, (New York: Ronald, 1935), p. 113.

devices. In one library, a branch librarian spent a month surveying a main library department, and the department head reciprocated for the branch. While this specific arrangement might smack slightly of retaliation, the idea is excellent. In several other libraries, recent surveys of the library as a whole, of certain departments or units, and of certain types of service were found highly valuable. Aside from the benefits gained by the staff members, constructive suggestions to aid the administrator may be obtained.

CHAPTER X

GENERAL APPRAISAL OF LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS have discussed various administrative problems and the way in which those problems are met in libraries. The purpose of this concluding chapter is to take an over-all look at library administration and point up certain general themes running throughout the entire study.

Administration is a very important aspect of librarianship because it provides the framework and the means by which the library seeks to attain its objectives. No library can function efficiently unless it has a well-planned organization, and its management procedures function smoothly and efficiently. If this is not the case the entire program suffers.

In part because of its rapid growth, the American public library has failed to give adequate attention to organization and management. As libraries have grown in size and complexity, problems involved in the acquisition and processing of material have assumed major importance. Many libraries have grown so that they have barely had time to keep up with the materials which have poured into their walls. As a result, administrative problems have frequently been neglected, and this has had unfortunate consequences.

Certain examples may be cited. Adequate financial support is fundamental to good service. And yet many libraries have for years struggled along with inadequate funds. To say that such a condition may be attributed to poor administration seems like over-simplification, and yet increased funds are not very likely if the library has not managed its funds efficiently in the past. Many libraries operate without a budget, or employ antiquated financial records that give little or no real information regarding financial operations. Under such conditions, it is not surprising that larger appropriations are not made.

Another reason for inadequate funds rests in the fact that professional librarians are doing too many non-professional tasks, things for which a community would never expect to pay well. This is not because they are poorly qualified for professional duties. It is a result of poor organization which fails to distinguish between the tasks which a clerical person can and should do, and those which a professional person must do.

High morale among staff members is another fundamental to good library service. It is largely a result of two conditions: first, complete understanding of and sympathy with the objectives of the organization and the relation of one's own activities to the attainment of those objectives, and second, complete confidence in the administration and approval of the methods used. One can bear many minor discomforts and hardships if these two conditions are met. Meeting them is quite properly a fundamental task of administration and involves both organization and management activities.

Other examples of the importance of administration could easily be cited: the need for progressive personnel practices in libraries, the need for careful planning of the library's activities, and the need for a clear and rational division of authority and responsibility among staff members. These and similar administrative problems cannot be neglected without making the entire organization suffer.

FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD ADMINISTRATION

There are two fundamentals to good administration in libraries as in other organizations. These are: first, inspiring and informed leadership, and second, efficient and progressive methods.

Good administration depends directly upon the qualification and abilities of those in administrative positions. They are the persons with whom the staff comes in contact and they must command respect and devotion. No organization can exist long

without strong leadership, not only from the chief librarian, but from the department heads and supervisors as well. While the top leadership in libraries has been strong, there is room for a great deal of improvement in the development of leaders at the intermediate levels of the hierarchy. It is just at this point that some of the most challenging opportunities exist in libraries today.

The development of administrative talent in the library profession involves recognition of its importance and careful efforts to train those with the requisite native abilities. Technical and professional skills alone, though certainly important, are no longer adequate equipment. Even for many minor positions, administrative ability is more important than professional skill. In training staff members for administration, attention must also be given to successful experience in the broader field of public administration. Happily, there are signs of increased activities in this direction.

The second fundamental to good administration is the use of efficient and progressive methods. These in and of themselves will not insure good results. But given able leadership, accepted and proved methods will make for more efficient management.

It is not surprising that librarians have been so busy getting things done that they have devoted little time and thought to devising better administrative methods. Indeed, they have even neglected the experience of other fields where there is much of value to be applied. There is some evidence that this deficiency is being corrected, and librarians are coming more and more to apply tested procedures from other fields, as well as to develop new methods of their own. Much more needs to be done, however.

MAJOR ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS IN LIBRARIES

Among the administrative problems found in the libraries studied, two are of especial importance: first, the need for the delegation of authority commensurate with responsibility, and

second, the need for a definition of library objectives and their reflection in the library's administration.

The evidence of this study has shown that in a great many libraries, administration is largely a one-man show. This has had certain unfortunate results, one of which has been a scarcity of competent candidates for important administrative positions, and hence, occasional appointments of persons with no library education or experience.

The scarcity of experienced administrators is due, in large part at least, to the fact that few libraries have developed important posts below that of the chief librarian, and have made little effort to discover administrative ability among promising members of their staffs. So far no substitute for experience in the development of competent administrators has been found, and librarians will not produce such persons unless conscious efforts are made to do so.

The absence of administrative positions works to the detriment of the individual library. If there is only one major position, the avenues of advancement for most of the staff are closed. When one gets to an important position of an operational nature, one must either be promoted next to department head or librarian. For the department head, the alternatives are librarian or another library. And when there are a dozen or more department heads, the other library (difficult as it is) appears to be the likelier possibility.

Again where there is only one person to make decisions on administrative matters, the decisions (if made) run the risk of being delayed, or being based upon insufficient study and thought. This, in turn, takes responsibility for effective service away from the only persons who can make that service effective, those in closer contact with operations than the chief can ever be.

The lack of experienced executives likewise puts additional burdens upon the chief. If most of his time is taken up with the details of library operation and management, he must

neglect other important responsibilities, such as coordinating activities, long-range planning, study and analysis of library problems, and community and governmental relations. Many library difficulties can be attributed to neglect of these important responsibilities.

A second problem in library administration is the need for a clear statement of the library's objectives and the reflection of these objectives in the library's organization and management. At present, library administration is built around activities performed: departments are created for individual activities, staff members are chosen on the basis of their aptitudes for certain activities, and the library's financial methods are devised to provide the funds as efficiently as possible. This approach has resulted in undue emphasis upon processes and consequent neglect of long-term plans and objectives.

Ideally, administration should be built directly around the objectives of the institution, and each activity should be directed toward the attainment of those objectives. Departmental organization should provide the framework, personnel management should supply the staff, and financial management should secure funds and measure costs. Every activity should have its relation, however indirect, to the attainment of the objectives. The definition of those objectives is therefore fundamental.

THE FUTURE OF LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION

Even though there is room for considerable improvement in library administration, there are many signs that such improvements will not be long in coming. Aside from evidence found in professional literature and conferences, the mere weight of administrative problems in many libraries forecasts immediate attention. Libraries cannot continue increasing in size without encountering problems which must be solved.

There is considerable justification for optimism regarding the future of library administration. First, there have already

been interesting experiments and new developments. As more librarians turn to the study of administrative problems additional improvements will result.

Second, librarians as individuals and as a group have always tried to maintain close relations with other disciplines. Because of the nature of his work the librarian must be aware of developments in the fields of education, government, public administration, and business. Thus, he is in an excellent position to learn from experience in those fields and to apply that experience to his own problems.

Third, American librarians have in the past been resourceful and original. Much of their energies have been devoted to the improvement of library processes, and these processes are now the envy of the entire library world. It is not too much to expect similar improvement in library organization and management, as librarians come to realize their importance. The present study is presented in the hope of contributing to this improvement.

LIBRARIES INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

GROUP I

LIBRARIES WITH LESS THAN TEN STAFF MEMBERS

Alton, Illinois, Jennie D. Hayner Library
Altoona, Pennsylvania, Altoona Public Library
Anderson, Indiana, Anderson Carnegie Public Library
Augusta, Georgia, Young Men's Library Association
Austin, Texas, Austin Public Library
Bloomfield, New Jersey, Free Public Library
Chester, Pennsylvania, West End Branch of the J. Lewis Crozer Library
Chicopee, Massachusetts, Chicopee Public Library
Covington, Kentucky, Covington Public Library
Danville, Illinois, Danville Public Library
Elkhart, Indiana, Elkhart Carnegie Public Library
Evansville, Indiana, Willard Library
Everett, Massachusetts, Shute Memorial Library
Hagerstown, Maryland, Washington County Free Library
Hamtramck, Michigan, Hamtramck Public Library
Hazleton, Pennsylvania, Hazleton Public Library
Irvington, New Jersey, Irvington Free Public Library
Jackson, Michigan, Jackson Public Library
Jamestown, New York, James Prendergast Free Library
Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Cambria Free Library
Joliet, Illinois, Joliet Public Library
Joplin, Missouri, Carnegie Public Library
Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Lancaster Free Public Library
Lexington, Kentucky, Lexington Public Library
McKeesport, Pennsylvania, Carnegie Free Library
Mansfield, Ohio, Mansfield Public Library
Miami, Florida, Flagler Memorial Library
Newark, Ohio, Newark Public Library
Newburgh, New York, Newburgh Free Library
Newport News, Virginia, Newport News Public Library
Pontiac, Michigan, Pontiac City Library
Port Arthur, Texas, Gates Memorial Library
Portsmouth, Ohio, Public Library
Portsmouth, Virginia, Portsmouth Public Library
Pueblo, Colorado, McClelland Public Library
Raleigh, North Carolina, Olivia Raney Library
Revere, Massachusetts, Public Library
Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Carnegie Free Public Library
Taunton, Massachusetts, Taunton Public Library
Upper Darby, Pennsylvania, Upper Darby Township and Sellers Memorial Library
Watertown, New York, The Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library
Wichita Falls, Texas, Kemp Public Library
Wilmington, North Carolina, Wilmington Public Library

Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Carnegie Public Library
 Woonsocket, Rhode Island, Harris Institute Library
 Zanesville, Ohio, The John McIntire Public Library

GROUP II

LIBRARIES WITH STAFF OF TEN TO TWENTY-FOUR

Alameda, California, Alameda Free Library
 Allentown, Pennsylvania, Allentown Free Library
 Atlantic City, New Jersey, Free Public Library
 Aurora, Illinois, Aurora Public Library
 Bay City, Michigan, Bay City Public Library
 Beaumont, Texas, Tyrrell Public Library
 Bellingham, Washington, Bellingham Public Library
 Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Bethlehem Public Library
 Bloomington, Illinois, Withers Public Library
 Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Public Library
 Charleston, West Virginia, Kanawha County Public Library
 Charlotte, North Carolina, Charlotte Public Library
 Chelsea, Massachusetts, Public Library
 Cicero, Illinois, Cicero Public Library
 Columbia, South Carolina, Richland County Public Library
 Council Bluffs, Iowa, Free Public Library
 Davenport, Iowa, Davenport Public Library
 Decatur, Illinois, Decatur Public Library
 Dubuque, Iowa, Carnegie-Stout Free Public Library
 Durham, North Carolina, Durham Public Library
 East Chicago, Indiana, East Chicago Public Library
 East St. Louis, Illinois, East St. Louis Public Library
 Easton, Pennsylvania, Easton Public Library
 El Paso, Texas, El Paso Public Library
 Elmira, New York, Steele Memorial Library
 Everett, Massachusetts, Parlin Memorial Library
 Fall River, Massachusetts, Public Library
 Fitchburg, Massachusetts, Fitchburg Public Library
 Galveston, Texas, Rosenberg Library
 Green Bay, Wisconsin, Kellogg Public Library
 Hamilton, Ohio, Lane Public Library
 Hammond, Indiana, Hammond Public Library
 Haverhill, Massachusetts, Public Library
 Highland Park, Michigan, McGregor Public Library
 Hoboken, New Jersey, Free Public Library
 La Crosse, Wisconsin, La Crosse Public Library
 Lawrence, Massachusetts, Lawrence Public Library
 Lorain, Ohio, Lorain Public Library
 Lowell, Massachusetts, Lowell City Library
 Malden, Massachusetts, Malden Public Library

Moline, Illinois, Moline Public Library
Muncie, Indiana, Muncie Public Library
Muskogee, Oklahoma, Muskogee Public Library
Nashua, New Hampshire, Nashua Public Library
New Britain, Connecticut, Library of the New Britain Institute
New Brunswick, New Jersey, Free Public Library
New Castle, Pennsylvania, New Castle Free Public Library
Norfolk, Virginia, Norfolk Public Library
Oak Park, Illinois, Oak Park Public Library
Ogden, Utah, Carnegie Free Library
Orange, New Jersey, Orange Free Library
Phoenix, Arizona, Phoenix Public Library
Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Berkshire Athenaeum
Plainfield, New Jersey, Public Library
Port Huron, Michigan, Port Huron Public Library
Poughkeepsie, New York, Adriaance Memorial Library
Quincy, Illinois, Free Public Library
Reading, Pennsylvania, Reading Public Library
Roanoke, Virginia, Roanoke Public Library
Rock Island, Illinois, Rock Island Public Library
Rome, New York, Jervis Library Association
St. Joseph, Missouri, Free Public Library
San Bernardino, California, Free Public Library of San Bernardino
San Jose, California, San Jose Public Library
Santa Ana, California, Santa Ana Public Library
Savannah, Georgia, Savannah Public Library
Schenectady, New York, Schenectady Public Library
Sheboygan, Wisconsin, Sheboygan Public Library
Shreveport, Louisiana, Shreve Memorial Library
Springfield, Illinois, Lincoln Library
Springfield, Missouri, Springfield Public Library
Steubenville, Ohio, Carnegie Library
Stockton, California, Stockton Free Public Library
Superior, Wisconsin, Superior Public Library
Tampa, Florida, Tampa Public Library
Topeka, Kansas, Free Public Library
Troy, New York, Troy Public Library
Waco, Texas, Waco Public Library
Warren, Ohio, Warren Public Library
Waterbury, Connecticut, Silas Bronson Library
Waterloo, Iowa, Waterloo Public Library
Watertown, Massachusetts, Free Public Library
Waukegan, Illinois, Waukegan Public Library
West Allis, Wisconsin, West Allis Public Library
Wheeling, West Virginia, Ohio County Public Library
White Plains, New York, White Plains Public Library
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, Osterhout Free Library
Williamsport, Pennsylvania, James V. Brown Library
York, Pennsylvania, Martin Memorial Library

GROUP III

LIBRARIES WITH TWENTY-FIVE TO SEVENTY-FOUR
STAFF MEMBERS

Albany, New York, Albany Public Library*
 Bayonne, New Jersey, Free Public Library
 Berkeley, California, Berkeley Public Library*
 Binghamton, New York, Binghamton Public Library
 Birmingham, Alabama, Birmingham Public Library
 Brockton, Massachusetts, Brockton Public Library
 Cambridge, Massachusetts, Cambridge Public Library
 Canton, Ohio, The Canton Public Library
 Chattanooga, Tennessee, Chattanooga Public Library
 Cleveland Heights, Ohio, Cleveland Heights Public Library
 Dallas, Texas, Dallas Public Library
 Des Moines, Iowa, Public Library
 Duluth, Minnesota, Duluth Public Library
 East Cleveland, Ohio, East Cleveland Public Library
 East Orange, New Jersey, Free Public Library
 Elizabeth, New Jersey, Free Public Library
 Erie, Pennsylvania, Erie Public Library
 Evanston, Illinois, Evanston Public Library
 Evansville, Indiana, Public Library
 Fort Worth, Texas, Fort Worth Public Library
 Fresno, California, Fresno County Free Library
 Gary, Indiana, Gary Public Library*
 Glendale, California, Glendale Public Library
 Houston, Texas, Houston Public Library
 Jacksonville, Florida, Free Public Library
 Kalamazoo, Michigan, Public Library
 Kansas City, Kansas, Public Library
 Kenosha, Wisconsin, Gilbert M. Simmons Library
 Knoxville, Tennessee, Lawson McGhee Library*
 Lakewood, Ohio, The Lakewood Public Library*
 Lima, Ohio, Lima Public Library
 Lincoln, Nebraska, Lincoln City Library
 Lynn, Massachusetts, Lynn Public Library
 Madison, Wisconsin, Madison Free Library
 Manchester, New Hampshire, City Library
 Medford, Massachusetts, The Medford Public Library
 Montclair, New Jersey, Free Public Library*
 Mount Vernon, New York, Mount Vernon Public Library
 Muskegon, Michigan, Hackley Public Library
 Nashville, Tennessee, Nashville Public Library
 New Haven, Connecticut, Free Public Library
 New Orleans, Louisiana, New Orleans Public Library

*Visited by one or both investigators.

New Rochelle, New York, New Rochelle Public Library
Newton, Massachusetts, Newton Free Library
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Carnegie Library
Omaha, Nebraska, Omaha Public Library
Pasadena, California, Pasadena Public Library*
Paterson, New Jersey, Free Public Library
Peoria, Illinois, Peoria Public Library
Quincy, Massachusetts, Thomas Crane Public Library
Racine, Wisconsin, Racine Public Library
Richmond, Virginia, Richmond Public Library
Rockford, Illinois, Rockford Public Library
Sacramento, California, Sacramento City Free Library*
Saginaw, Michigan, Saginaw Public Libraries
Salt Lake City, Utah, Free Public Library
San Antonio, Texas, San Antonio Public Library
Santa Barbara, California, Santa Barbara Free Public Library
Santa Monica, California, Santa Monica Public Library*
Scranton, Pennsylvania, Scranton Public Library
Sioux City, Iowa, Sioux City Public Library
Somerville, Massachusetts, Somerville Public Library
Spokane, Washington, Spokane Public Library
Springfield, Ohio, Warder Public Library
Syracuse, New York, Syracuse Public Library
Tacoma, Washington, Tacoma Public Library
Trenton, New Jersey, Free Public Library*
Tulsa, Oklahoma, Tulsa Public Library
Wichita, Kansas, Wichita City Library
Wilmington, Delaware, Wilmington Institute Free Library
Yonkers, New York, Yonkers Public Library*

GROUP IV

LIBRARIES WITH SEVENTY-FIVE TO ONE HUNDRED
FORTY-NINE STAFF MEMBERS

Akron, Ohio, Akron Public Library
Bridgeport, Connecticut, Bridgeport Public Library
Columbus, Ohio, Columbus Public Library*
Denver, Colorado, Denver Public Library
Fort Wayne, Indiana, Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County
Kansas City, Missouri, Kansas City Public Library
Long Beach, California, Long Beach Public Library*
Louisville, Kentucky, Louisville Free Public Library*
San Diego, California, San Diego Public Library*
Springfield, Massachusetts, City Library Association*
Worcester, Massachusetts, Free Public Library*
Youngstown, Ohio, Reuben McMillan Free Library*

*Visited by one or both investigators.

GROUP V

LIBRARIES WITH ONE HUNDRED FIFTY TO TWO HUNDRED
NINETY-NINE STAFF MEMBERS

Baltimore, Maryland, Enoch Pratt Free Library*
Buffalo, New York, Buffalo Public Library
Dayton, Ohio, Dayton Public Library*
Indianapolis, Indiana, Indianapolis Public Library*
Minneapolis, Minnesota, Minneapolis Public Library
Newark, New Jersey, Public Library of Newark, New Jersey*
Oakland, California, Oakland Public Library*
Portland, Oregon, Library Association of Portland*
Providence, Rhode Island, Providence Public Library*
Rochester, New York, Public Library*
San Francisco, California, San Francisco Public Library*
Seattle, Washington, Seattle Public Library*
Toledo, Ohio, Toledo Public Library*
Washington, D. C., Public Library of the District of Columbia*

GROUP VI

LIBRARIES WITH THREE HUNDRED STAFF MEMBERS
AND OVER

Boston, Massachusetts, Public Library of the City of Boston*
Brooklyn, New York, Brooklyn Public Library*
Chicago, Illinois, Chicago Public Library*
Cincinnati, Ohio, Public Library of Cincinnati*
Cleveland, Ohio, Cleveland Public Library*
Detroit, Michigan, The Public Library*
Los Angeles, California, Los Angeles Public Library*
New York City, The New York Public Library*
New York City, Queens Borough Public Library*
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, The Free Library of Philadelphia*
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh*
St. Louis, Missouri, St. Louis Public Library*

*Visited by one or both investigators.

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